BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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Hon President	KATHRYN CROSBY	
MANAGEMENT TEAM		
Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556 e-mail: icc@iccircle.globalnet.co.uk
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	3 Osborne Close Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 2EE Tel: 01625 528942 e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com
U.S. & Canada Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel: (703) 241-5608
Australian & New Zealand Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	34A Geoffrey Street Turramurra, NSW Australia 2074
European Representative	ETTY GITS	Karbouwstraat 7 4817 GB Breda The Netherlands Tel: 076 - 5719 804 e-mail: e.gits@hetnet.nl
Assistant Secretary/ CD's/Records	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 02392 666677 e-mail: jimreilly@freenet.co.uk
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144 e-mail: b.bishop@testcar.co.uk
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0208 959 3394 e-mail: lionelpairp@hotmail.com
Photographs Editor/ Archivist	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone, Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

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Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

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EDITORIAL

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" sang Bing and this is certainly his time of year. How nice to hear his voice in shops and at parties as well as on radio and TV.

May I be the first to welcome Kathryn Crosby as our new Honorary President in the pages of BING. Michael Crampton covers this exciting development more fully in his section and I hope that we shall be able to maintain a closer relationship with Kathryn in the future. George O'Reilly has of course played a vital part in this and in liaising with the family members in the past which manifested itself in the excellent South Bank Show tribute. Incidentally, our Honorary President was featured in Saga magazine in September and she has certainly obtained some great publicity for Bing over the last 12 months.

At long last, Gary Giddins' book is on the verge of getting into the shops and having read the advance proof I can tell you that the wait has been very worthwhile. A more detailed review will be found in the 'Books 'n' Bing' section and this is definitely the book we have wanted for so long. If you do nothing else after reading the magazine, make sure that you order this book. Another Gary, this time Hamann, has produced a further book in his series and please see Trading Post for details. Whilst on the subject of books, I have accepted an offer from Scarecrow Press in the USA to publish my diary of Bing's life. I'll let you have further details when the book is nearing completion.

Our 50th year as a club has been very rewarding with Alan Fisher helping to give us a most memorable annual meeting. Wig, aided by Laura, goes from strength to strength in the USA and Canada and you will read of his dealings with Pat Boone and Michael Feinstein on other pages. The forthcoming event at Hofstra University promises to be most important and Wig is staying close to the planners.

Under a headline 'Crooning for Dollars' in the Los Angeles Times in August, we learned of the following dispute:-

> "The heirs of Bing Crosby, whose "White Christmas" is one of the top selling recordings in history, are suing MCA Records for $16 million plus punitive damages, contending Der Bingle's former record company has been cheating the family out of royalties since the early 1970s.
>
> According to the suit, filed in Superior Court in Santa Monica, the former Decca Records—long ago gobbled up by MCA Records Inc.—paid the royalties under terms of a 1948 contract that a trustee for the estate of Crosby's late wife, Wilma Wyatt, contends never was signed. The suit charges that record company officials launched a conspiracy in 1972 to claim the 1948 contract prevailed, and pay royalties under its terms, which favored the record company.
>
> The alleged scam was uncovered during an audit in October, the suit states. The suit seeks recovery of $16,336,931, an accounting and a court order revoking Crosby's contracts, and holding his master recordings and royalties in trust."

Our own Daily Express had a similar story although it stated:

> "...Crosby's family is suing the giant MCA Records for £42M, claiming they robbed the velvet voiced singer of his proper royalties since the early 1970s... The relatives want £10.5M in compensatory damages and up to another £31.5M in punitive damages. They say a conspiracy to defraud Crosby began five years before he died..."

We know nothing more than this and as we know newspapers often get it all wrong. However, developments are awaited with interest.

In Bing's 1971 Christmas show he took part in a segment in which as a tramp he was trying to get locked up for the Winter so that he would have somewhere warm to sleep. Greg Van Beek has generously supplied a photo of Bing in tramp garb which we have used as our front cover this time. The back cover consists of a Christmas greeting from Bing and Kathryn which was kindly provided by Alan Fisher plus one of the Christmas photos of Bing and his second family. To maintain the Christmas theme, we are reproducing a suitable letter from Bing to Gord Atkinson on the inside back cover and we thank Gord for releasing this to us.

May I too pass on Seasons greetings to you all.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Members will be delighted to learn that in our 50th year **Kathryn Crosby** has kindly consented to become our first *honorary president*. There are no onerous duties attaching to the post but we do look forward to an occasional letter from Kathryn whenever special occasions arise and we are grateful for her humorous but sincere response to our request that she take on the honorary title. Kathryn's letter read as follows:

Dear Michael,

First of all, a thousand pardons! From my habitual careening about the universe, helping God to make the flowers bloom, I have just arrived in Nevada to discover your letter, dated August 28, in the middle of the pile on the chair in my office. (You'll be happy to know that in my absence all incoming correspondence is chucked into a chair to await my return like the original toy soldier, and with equal prospects of satisfaction. You really have chanced upon an executive type.)

Honorary President you say! Could my mother have been right after all? She always insisted that if I gobbled up all the oatmeal that she'd just finished burning on the top of the oil stove, I'd surely be president some day.

In later years, when I prided myself on having developed a rudimentary critical faculty, I regarded her narrowly, certain that she'd lie to me about other things. But now it all seems to be coming true, and I remand my apologies to The Great Beyond.

In any events I accept with pleasure and wish to thank all my constituents for their faith in me, and to remind them to vote early and often for the Crosby ticket in any and all future elections. What did I just say? Dear Lord, the political fever seems to be contagious.

But more seriously I do wish to thank each and every one of you for helping me to carry the torch throughout the long, dark years since my beloved husband's death. He was the center of my life, and I miss him terribly.

Have a great dinner meeting. My thoughts and prayers will be with you.

Best wishes,

Kathryn Crosby

In celebrating our anniversary we mentioned the four founding members of the club one of who was **Art Allen** and to our amazement Art rang your secretary to make contact with the club 46 years after he left the Crosby Society to forge a career in business. Happily I was able to tell Art that his early work was not in vain, the club had continued and that we had praised his formative efforts in the last issue of **BING**. He was stunned but appreciative and he is now receiving his copies of our respected journal. An article by Art about the early years will be found elsewhere in this edition of BING.

LEEDS 2000

Seventy guests attended our 35th annual dinner/meeting and we were very privileged to have the company of **Alan Fisher** who regaled us with anecdotes of his times in the Crosby household. Malcolm will cover the event more fully but I would like to place on record my thanks to Alan, Jim Reilly, Arnold Pope for their contributions in helping make this one of the best and smoothest run events we have ever held.

Alan Fisher arrives at the Leeds meeting
(Photo by Trevor Wagstaff)

Special awards were made to **Michael O'Toole and Eric Jackson** for completing 50 years with the club and **Arnold Pope** was presented with a certificate acknowledging his attendance and help at all 35 annual meetings. **Wig & Laura Wiggins** were awarded a certificate of merit for their outstanding and professional work in promoting the ICC in the United States and Canada. Alan Fisher summed up his feelings of the day as follows:

Dear Michael & Judy

I couldn't wait to write you both to say how much I enjoyed, really enjoyed last Sunday. It was all so organised like the chairman's

meeting at General Electric or some equally famous company!! I sat in awe at how smoothly it all went.

Thank you for asking me and thank you for all your kindness, you were both too kind. All your members are the real holders of Bing Crosby's torch, long may it blaze and shine. It has determined me to go through my trunks and look for more Crosby momentoes and then if time permits I will bring them next year. You all so deserve these souvenirs for you are the true guardians of Bing Crosby's memories.

With affection
Alan

NEW MEMBERS

IRELAND

Eddie Murphy (Longford) broadcasts a weekly programme called 'Sounds Nice' and features a Crosby Corner and we are pleased that reaction to the programme has been very positive as you will read in Bert Bishop's section. Stan White, George Harwood and Jim Reilly have been able to help with some of the tracks that Eddie sought for use in his Crosby spot.

ENGLAND

Fred Norris (Somerset) and **Edward Broadly** (Leeds) are both 'young' eighty year olds and they have found us after a lifetime spent enjoying Bing's music. Fred believes that he heard Bing sing two titles that he has not been able to obtain on tape. The titles are 'Dixie Lee' and 'My Sweet Virginny' and Fred would like to hear from anyone who can help with his quest.

Helen Rutherford (Cheshire), **Mike Watson** (Herts), **Herbert Howsley MBE** (Sheffield), **Terry Griffiths** (Swansea), **Hugh Haggerty** (Greenock), and last but by no means least - **Art Allen** (Wainfleet St Mary) founding president of the British Bing Club.

Welcome to all and may you long enjoy your membership of ICC.

DONATIONS

ICC members continue to be generous with their donations and for this issue we received an exceptional gift from our two enthusiastic Danish members **OLE MEISTRUP & GUN DAMO.** May we thank you both for your great gift.

Also received was a generous legacy from the estate of our late member Theo Harris. And in support we also received gifts from Tom Hughes, Tom Matthews and Christine Rice-Garwood.

All donations are gratefully received and it would not be possible for the ICC to grow and prosper without such generosity.

DEATHS

Sadly I must let you know that member **Vic Early** of Surrey died last year and we extend our condolences to his family.

"...AND HERE'S BING!"

Praise, plaudits and laudation are all being given to Lionel for his 363 page testimonial to Bing's radio work for this is truly a work of scholarship and insight. The reader is taken on a wonderful journey all the way from *Old Gold presents Paul Whiteman (1929-30)* to Bing's final appearance on radio in 1977. The quotations along the way give a fascinating insight into contemporary opinion of Bing's craftsmanship. Well done, Lionel and Michael O'Toole for bringing us a book that we will treasure for a lifetime.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2001

Your fee for the coming year is now due and as always I urge you to respond promptly so that my workload is kept within reasonable bounds. Please include a SAE if you need an acknowledgement that your remittance has been received. Subs remain the same as last year.

CALENDAR 2001

There are plenty of copies of this ***Collectors Item*** remaining and we urge you to support the sale of this beautifully produced calendar which features Crosby items which many of us will never own and may never see other than as featured on this artwork.

Finally, may I thank everyone who has contributed to BING and the ICC during the past year. Your contributions have helped sustain the high quality of our journal and service to members and may we, with your help, continue to merit the approval of our readers.

My best wishes to all members for a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Michael Crampton

THE EARLY YEARS

As foreshadowed by Michael, Art Allen has indeed written to us with some memories of the early days of our club and this is what he has to say.

During my RAF service in the hot summer of 1947, a Corporal came into my office each day at NAAFI break. We had a utility radio (most static items were made to meagre standards) and one morning I requested silence as I was trying to listen to a rich sounding voice I could not recognise on the radio. Alan the corporal (in his early thirties) told me it was Bing Crosby and his early 'Columbia Classics'

had been reissued. I was impressed and at the weekend I called at my local record shop armed with record reference numbers to buy some of these vintage Crosby discs. It was necessary to give the numbers in order to get served owing to the crowded shops. No displays, just records in paper sleeves filed in catalogue order.

Corporal Alan Bean not only advised me on Brunswick titles but even obtained them for me at the weekend. All Bing's releases were available to record retailers via Select Wholesale at Trent Bridge, Nottingham. In seven years I had collected over a thousand 78's. I placed an ad. in *The Gramophone* for Crosby collectors and so was able to contact Les Gaylor, Jean Rainey, Dot Hardiman and Cab Smith. After leaving the RAF to return to civilian life, Les, Jean and Dot set about searching for a Crosby Appreciation Club and were surprised that one did not exist. So Jean wrote to Larry Crosby to ask if we could organise a club. I'm sure I prepared a specimen "Crosbyana" for Larry's perusal and we had Larry's approval with best wishes and help if and when required. We decided on a name, "The British Bing Club".

At my own expense, I acquired a quarto size flat bed duplicator and a second hand typewriter - bought with some of my RAF gratuity. Les Gaylor came up with a wonderful idea to attract members. He sent me every detail of every record made by Bing. Press no., date of recording and place of recording. I put this data into a semi hard back booklet and we offered it free to every new member. We placed one ad. in "The Gramophone" but it was copied by the countless film magazines that had flooded the market aimed at the very young. Dozens of letters addressed to Bing Crosby came to my home address requesting photographs that I could not supply nor afford the postage if I had photos.

As you will appreciate, at this stage our magazine could only be prepared and produced at one place by one person. That was me! Using the flat bed duplicator was very slow as was the hand stapling, wrapping, stamping and posting at three letterboxes. A letter from Trudi, president of Frank Sinatra's fan club with a copy of their foolscap bulletin with no attempt at artwork was functional and presented news of Frank's work. I discussed this system with Jean, Les and Dot as well as suggesting an upgrading of our standard letterhead to be in two tone blue with a printed photo of Bing next to the new title 'The Crosby Society'. It did look good and we agreed that an artist of Bing's immense standing deserved a more professional fan club image. I bought a s/h Roneo rotary duplicator (again out of my pocket) and the adrenalin flowed anew with our new "Crosby Post". There were no longer any worries about sharing initials with the BBC at Broadcasting House. The annual sub of 7/6 was still the same. New members joined and a reprint of Les's Crosby Discography was needed and done. Once more I was snowed under and very stressed but Reg Davies and his friend came to my rescue and took on the duplicating leaving me to do the stencil preparation.

Unfortunately circumstances forced Reg to return the responsibility of duplicating and posting to me. I asked him to scrap the duplicator and I gave the duplicating to a very competitive firm which proved to give excellent reproduction. This system proved to be the best and all worked fine until I was offered a good career move by a family friend. It meant working a few evenings a week and to continue running the club would have meant no time for a personal relationship involving a girl called Lynn. I wrote to Jean Rainey asking her to continue my work but she was unable to do. Obviously, I was melancholy and had to decide to close the club and to offer full refunds to all members with unexpired membership. Cash in hand was used on the last "Crosby Post" but not one penny of my investment in the two duplicators or typewriter was recouped by me.

Forty four years have now passed and, in the course of my own furniture and carpet retail business, I have been involved in the production of brochures and price lists using ever advancing systems of reproduction. Even so, looking at the ICC's BING fills me with delight. In 1950 when we started we could not even dream of attaining such a high standard. I have no doubt that all ICC members appreciate the organisation skills and the superb quarterly BING produced by a most admirable team. Bing himself would be so proud and so grateful. I am really impressed.

Art Allen

'Sweet Leilani, Heavenly Flower' is alive and well.

Bing's first million seller and Academy Award winning song was written by Harry Owens following the birth of his daughter, Leilani. Bing heard the song whilst in Hawaii in 1936 and got it into his film 'Waikiki Wedding' and the rest is history. Harry Owens died in 1986 but his son Butch Owens has a summer retreat near the home of our member Sam Fleshman in Oregon. Sam and Butch have met on a number of occasions with Sam giving Butch a video tape of 'Waikiki Wedding' and cassettes of songs written by Harry Owens. In turn, Butch has gifted Sam a copy of his father's autobiography titled 'Sweet Leilani'. Sam said he would love to meet Leilani if ever she was in the neighbourhood and let him now take up the story.

"On September 12 about 8:00 a.m., I received a phone call from Butch Owens saying his sister Leilani was going to visit him that afternoon. It was something I've been looking forward to for some time. After scrambling around to re-arrange my busy retiree's schedule, my wife and I went to Butch's summer retreat cabin along the McKenzie River about 22 miles from our home. On arriving, I was pleasantly surprised on meeting Leilani, who is now about 65 years old and living near a grandson in Flagstaff, Arizona. She has four children, one of which is called Leilani, Junior, and several grandchildren. She is retired but doing a lot of volunteer work with charities. She is a very friendly and open person with a great personality. We related very well and the time really flew by. Near the end of our visit, their brother, Tim, who now lives in Hawaii stopped by. After a little while, we had to take our leave because they were all going over to their step-mother's residence for dinner. A very pleasant time was had by all.

I was thrilled when she autographed her father's book under his autograph. She also autographed the sheet music of 'Sweet Leilani'. I'm enclosing a picture of the occasion. I'm looking forward to meeting the family when we get together again next year."

(L to R: Butch Owens, Sam Fleshman, Sweet Leilani and Tim Owens)

What a great story from Sam and how nice to learn something about Leilani herself.

Bing and the Paul Taylor Choristers

Back in October, an entry on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board from a man who wanted some advice on some Crosby items attracted my attention. I obtained details direct from him and to my amazement found that the man had a large number of acetate records from the early years of the Kraft Music Hall when Bing was regularly accompanied by the Paul Taylor Choristers. He has recordings of songs that have never been heard in public since they were broadcast and I would guess that the recordings were done for Paul Taylor much as Bob Burns had acetates made of his contributions to the show. I told the gentleman that he had some most valuable items and after a further exchange of e-mails, I put him in touch with Charlie Baillie who lives close to him in Los Angeles. Charlie has met the man and is endeavouring to find someone who can transfer the recordings to CD or cassette and make them available to Crosby fans everywhere. We await news.

Sharing glimpses of fame

In our last issue, we quoted from the column of Nick Clooney in the Cincinnati Post. Here is another extract, this time from an August edition of the paper.

It's been two months since we had a "Brush With The Famous" column. That is much too long.

Tom Caradonia, the president of the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau, starts us off with a great story about "Bing Crosby and my mother. Mr. Crosby used to come to Houston to do a benefit for his wife Katherine's favorite charity. ... They used to stay at the Hyatt Regency Houston, where I worked for the first seven years of my hotel career.

"During one of these events, my parents had come back to Houston for a business and pleasure trip (and they stayed at the hotel). ... My dad was working and mom was in her room so I said, 'Let me show you around the hotel.' During our walk we entered the Imperial Ballroom and Mr. Crosby was getting ready to rehearse for the night's benefit. There were 110 tables set for 10 people each, but at that moment the only people on hand were Mr. Crosby, the orchestra, my mom and I.

"I asked Mr. Crosby if it was OK for my mom to watch him rehearse and he most graciously said, 'Yes.' As I walked out of the ballroom and back to my office, I saw Mr. Crosby come down to her table and ask her name. My mom said, 'Mary.' Mr. Crosby took her hand and sang, 'For it was Mary, Mary, plain as any name could be...' They definitely do not make them like my mom or Bing Crosby anymore."

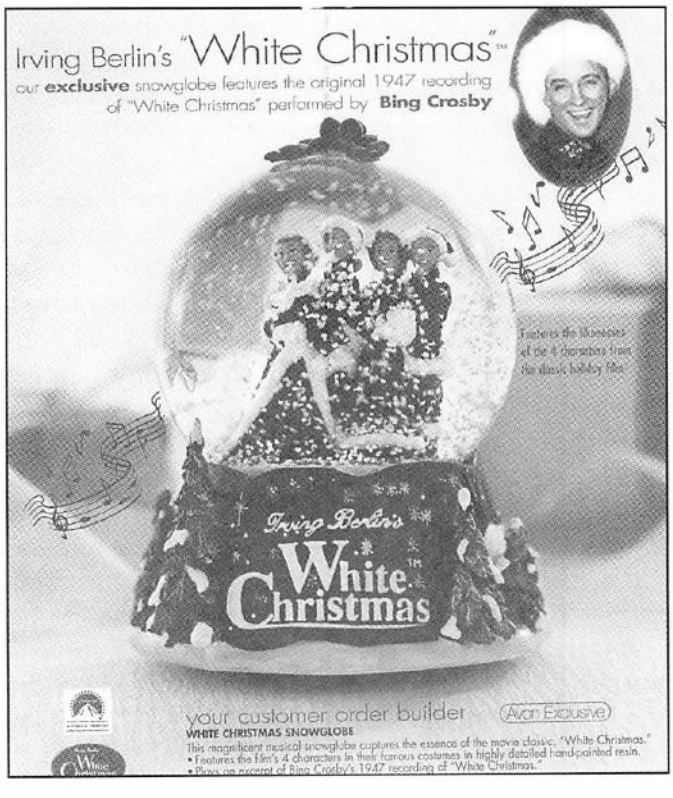
Nick Clooney

BING IN THE USA

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

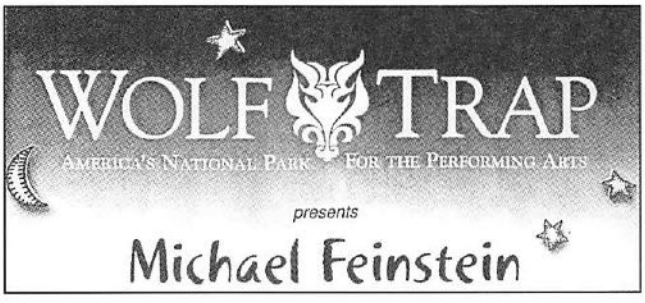
This holiday season, Bing is prominently featured in two unusual Christmas ornaments being offered for sale in the United States by AVON PRODUCTS and CARLTON GREETING CARDS. AVON is offering through its catalog sales division a musical Snowglobe of Irving Berlin's "WHITE CHRISTMAS", containing resin likenesses of Bing, Rosemary Clooney, Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen in their costumes from the movie's finale, atop a small forest of evergreen trees. The globe also plays an excerpt of Bing's 1947 Decca recording of "White Christmas". It is available directly from local AVON dealers for $34.99.

The CARLTON ornament is from an Heirloom Collection series of "Christmas Crooners". Entitled "At Home With Bing", it shows him in a chair holding a pipe. This ornament also plays an excerpt of Bing's 1947 recording of "White Christmas". It is available from stationery stores which carry CARLTON CARDS for $28.00. In addition to these new ornaments, the announced release of a remastered version of the film "WHITE CHRISTMAS" on DVD should assure that Bing is again recognized this year throughout the United States as the "Voice of Christmas". As usual, it just wouldn't be Christmas without Bing!


Irving Berlin's "White Christmas"™
our exclusive snowglobe features the original 1947 recording of "White Christmas" performed by Bing Crosby
Irving Berlin's
White Christmas
your customer order builder
Avon Exclusive
WHITE CHRISTMAS SNOWGLOBE

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN AT WOLF TRAP

When popular entertainer Michael Feinstein joined the ICC in 1999, I asked his ever-helpful assistant in Los Angeles, Megann Kane, to please let me know the next time that Michael came to the Washington, D.C. area to perform, as my wife and I would very much like to meet him. That opportunity finally arrived this past August, and here is that story.



Those of us who live in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area look forward every summer to the opportunity of enjoying outdoor musical and dramatic performances at Wolf Trap Farm Park, which is located in Northern Virginia, only a fifteen-minute drive from our home in Arlington. Founded in 1971, and known as "America's National Park For the Performing Arts", Wolf Trap offers each year a wide variety of live performances ranging from jazz and blues to symphonic concerts, from country music, to opera, from folk singers to complete Broadway musicals. It is a unique venue in every way and grows more popular each year.

Seating 3765 persons under a soaring, two-level wooden pavilion whose sides are open to the warm summer evening breezes, Wolf Trap also includes another 3100 open-air seats on the rolling lawns that surround the pavilion, where families can enjoy the performances in relaxed informality, utilizing lawn chairs, blankets and picnic baskets for a delightful night under the stars. Over the past thirty years, the mammoth Wolf trap stage has featured such artists as Pete Seeger, Placido Domingo, Itzhak Perlman, John Raitt, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Tony Bennett, Johnny Mathis, Ella Fitzgerald and the New Orleans Preservation Hall Jazz Band, to name just a few. Every year, from May to September, there is no more enjoyable setting than Wolf Trap for seeing your favorite artist perform.

This past July, I received a most welcome telephone call from Michael Feinstein's office in Los Angeles to tell me that he would be appearing at Wolf Trap on August 9th, and that he would like for my wife, Laura, and me to be his guests that evening.

And what a delightful evening it turned out to be. The weather was perfect and a capacity crowd filled both the pavilion seats and the lawn area for what was a tremendous performance by Michael, one that was enthusiastically received by everyone there. Laura and I had, of course, seen Michael a number of times on television, but we had not previously had the opportunity to watch him in person. And it was quite a revelation. At Wolf Trap, Michael appeared with an outstanding, hard-driving big band from Hawaii called "The Big Kahuna", and believe me, that band could really play! And the surprising thing was that, except for their leader, all of the band members appeared to be extremely young (at least, to an old fogey like me). They all seemed to be in their early-to-mid twenties, causing me to conclude that the music of the Swing Era certainly is alive and well among a new generation.

Michael opened his show with a fast-moving, up-tempo version of "Birth of the Blues", with the full band going all-out behind him. For those like myself who are more accustomed to Michael's solo interpretations of songs by George and Ira Gershwin, this opening number was quite a surprise. And with a much stronger voice than I expected, Michael more than held his own as the band blasted away while he roamed the stage singing from a hand mike. The remainder of Michael's hour-long performance alternated between other big band numbers such as "Come Rain Or Come Shine", and his more familiar ballads, accompanied only by his solo piano and the rhythm group from the band. For me, Michael's most enjoyable songs of the evening included a warmly-sung "Someone To Watch Over Me" and a delightful, audience-teaser version of "As Time Goes By". After asking the audience to guess the name of the most-performed song of the 20th century ("White Christmas" was one of the incorrect answers), Michael eventually said that the hands-down winner was "Happy Birthday". However, he told the audience that he would rather play and sing, instead, one of his personal favorites from the past hundred years. But he said that he would begin with the verse of the song, because hardly anyone ever recognized it, and he always enjoyed hearing the ripple of recognition that ran through the audience when he finally began the first line of the chorus. And he was absolutely right, there was no noticeable reaction until the first strains of "You must remember this... " were heard. Both young and old alike had no difficulty in recognizing the memorable theme from "CASABLANCA" at that point, I can assure you.

Throughout the evening, Michael displayed both an excellent sense of humor and a very relaxed stage presence, whether singing fast up-tempo numbers with the big band, or performing quietly from his piano bench. He more than deserved the standing applause he received at the end of the evening, which came all too soon for everyone present.

Michael Feinstein

After the performance, Laura and I were pleased to be able to meet with Michael backstage to congratulate him, and to talk a little about Bing and the International Crosby Circle. Since joining the ICC, Michael has been a most enthusiastic member, and he has for many years expressed great admiration for Bing, both personally and professionally. Michael has added the entire JONZO RECORDS series of compact discs to his own music collection, and he told us that he looks forward very much to future releases in the series. I asked Michael if he would consider adding a "Crosby medley" to his repertoire, as I thought that might prove to be very popular with his audiences. He acknowledged this, and said that he already had a favorite arrangement of "Pennies From Heaven" that he enjoyed performing, and he would try to do a little better by Bing's songs in the future. But he added that his tour with The Big Kahuna band didn't quite fit in with the style of many of Bing's hits, which I could not really disagree with.

Michael Feinstein is a delightful individual, very friendly in person, and a pleasure to talk with. The ICC is fortunate to have his strong support for our efforts to keep Bing's legacy alive, and I expressed our appreciation to him for his continued interest in Bing's musical heritage. Laura and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Michael, and we both look forward to seeing him perform again whenever he returns to the Washington, D.C. area.

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ON BING

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
HOFSTRA CULTURAL CENTER
Hempstead, New York 11549

On October 6th, at the invitation of Hofstra University, I took an Amtrak train from Washington, D.C. to New York City to participate in the first planning meeting for the three-day academic conference on Bing's life and career which is scheduled to be held at the Hofstra campus on Long Island on November 14-16, 2002.

Present at the luncheon session were Dr. Ruth Prigozy of Hofstra University, who is serving as Conference Director, Professor Walter Raubicheck from Pace University in New York City, who is working with Dr. Prigozy on advance planning, Will Friedwald, well-known author and popular music critic, other staff members from Hofstra and myself, representing the ICC. The principal purposes of this meeting were to establish a general theme for the conference, to outline subjects to be covered during the major academic presentations, and to compile a list of names from the entertainment world who knew or worked with Bing who might be asked to perform or otherwise participate in the conference. After some discussion, it was decided to give the Hofstra conference the provisional overall theme of: "!BING! CROSBY AND AMERICAN CULTURE"

We also agreed to plan for individual presentations about the important aspects of Bing's life and career, including such topics as (1) recordings, (2) radio (3) films, (4) television (5) activities during World War II, (6) charitable efforts, (7) sports interests, etc. Beginning this coming Spring, Hofstra University will solicit specific proposals from experts and academicians on these and other subjects for papers to be discussed during the conference.

At my request, Dr. Prigozy agreed to prepare an announcement flyer about the conference for distribution to ICC members with this issue of BING. The official "Call For Papers", will be sent early next year from Hofstra University to all interested members of the academic and entertainment communities throughout the country and abroad. A subsequent review of these papers will provide further insight into the most appropriate themes to be emphasized at the conference itself.

I also recommended that Hofstra University send formal invitations to each of the various Crosby organizations seeking their official participation in the conference. Accordingly, Club Crosby, Bing's Friends and Collectors Society, the Victorian Bing Crosby Society and the International Crosby Circle should each receive their invitations in the near future. Of course, as many members of the Crosby organizations as possible will be most welcome to attend the conference as individuals, along with members of the general public. Over 1,500 persons attended the Frank Sinatra conference at Hofstra in 1998, and we expect that Bing will attract just as much, if not more, attention.

All in all, this meeting was a very interesting and highly useful beginning to what I am confident will be a major event in restoring Bing's reputation as the pre-eminent and most popular entertainer of the 20th Century. I would like to thank Dr. Ruth Prigozy and her staff for arranging this session at Pace University and for inviting me to attend to represent the ICC in these discussions. I will report further on developments regarding the Hofstra conference in forthcoming issues of BING.

A NEW BING-ANDREWS SISTERS COMPACT DISC

At the request of fellow ICC member Andy McKaie, Senior Vice President of the Universal Music Group in California, I have compiled the track listing and written the liner notes for a new compact disc collection entitled "A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM BING CROSBY & THE ANDREWS SISTERS", which is being released for this holiday season. This new compilation includes all six of their popular joint Christmas recordings for Decca from the 1940's and 1950's, seven holiday classics by Bing alone, and a further seven yuletide favorites by the Andrews Sisters. Look for this new CD at your local music store under Universal catalog number 088-112337-2.

Bing's solo recordings on this CD include "Happy Holiday", "O Fir Tree Dark". "Christmas In Killarney", "The First Snowfall", "Looks Like a Cold, Cold, Winter", "You're All I Want For Christmas" and "Is Christmas Only a Tree". What, "White Christmas" is missing!?! Yes, it is this time, but you can still find various versions of Bing's immortal holiday classic on several other MCA compact discs, including two other collections that I previously compiled for Universal Music: "THE VERY BEST OF BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS" (MCAD-12019) and the definitive 2-CD set "BING CROSBY - THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS" (MCAD2-11840). Both of these earlier MCA releases of Bing's holiday recordings for DECCA continue to be best sellers, and I am pleased to report that they are again available in music stores throughout the country this

year, along with the new Bing/Andrews Sisters collection. So, if you haven't purchased them yet, you may still do so this Christmas season.

BING'S FILMS ON TELEVISION

Since the Summer issue of BING was published, there have been only a few of Bing's films shown on the national cable television networks in the United States. Hopefully, this trend will be reversed during the approaching holiday season, when several of Bing's perennial favorites are always very much in evidence. And with the recently announced release of a newly-restored version of 1954"s "WHITE CHRISTMAS" on DVD, good sales might just spur a little more interest among Universal executives about releasing some of Bing's other Paramount films on DVD and/or video during the coming year. Let's hope so.

The following films were shown on American television during the past four months:

July 2000
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - THE COUNTRY GIRL - HOLIDAY INN - THE ROAD TO HONG KONG - ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS

August 2000
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S - THE COUNTRY GIRL - HOLIDAY INN - ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS

September 2000
THE COUNTRY GIRL - GOING HOLLYWOOD - GOING MY WAY - HIGH SOCIETY - ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

October 2000
THE COUNTRY GIRL - HOLIDAY INN - ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - SAY ONE FOR ME

NEW BING RELEASES ON DVD

The small number of Bing's films and television appearances that are available in the increasingly popular DVD (Digital Versatile Disc) format in the United States continues to grow. Announced for release this holiday season are new DVD versions of "WHITE CHRISTMAS" (from Universal), "ROAD TO BALI" (from Delta) and "A BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS" (from Questar) . This latter DVD features excerpts from Bing's annual Christmas television specials and was previously issued on video in 1998.

The current list of Bing's DVD releases in the United States is as follows:

A BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS (Questar Entertainment)
THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S (Republic Pictures)
GOING MY WAY (Universal Cinema Classics)
HOLIDAY INN (Universal Cinema Classics)
ROAD TO BALI (Delta Entertainment)
ROAD TO MOROCCO (Universal Cinema Classics)
ROAD TO UTOPIA (Universal Cinema Classics)
WHITE CHRISTMAS (Universal Cinema Classics)

American and Canadian ICC members who have become DVD collectors should be able to obtain all of Bing's releases from their local music/video stores. In the Washington, D. C. area, I have noticed over the past year that the video sections in the major stores are significantly shrinking in size, while the DVD sections continue to expand.

ICC members who have not yet added a DVD player to their home entertainment center might wish to do so in the near future. The cost of DVD players has been reduced substantially (to the level of VCR players), and the number of films available on DVD is now growing rapidly. The clarity and flexibility of the DVD system is clearly superior to video tapes, and it is quite possible that we might see some of Bing's films appear on DVD that have never been released on video. Check it out during the coming year, I think you will be impressed.

A SPECIAL WELCOME TO PAT BOONE

In the Winter 1999 issue of BING, I reported on a television appearance in Philadelphia by well-known singer Pat Boone, during which Pat introduced a special video entitled "THE CROONERS" produced by his new GOLD LABEL compact disc/video company. This video contained a warm and thoughtful history of popular male singers in the United States, with Bing being prominently featured and referred to as a "national treasure" by Pat.

Subsequently, I learned that "THE CROONERS" video was being offered for sale to the general public by Pat's GOLD LABEL and recommended it to ICC members for their video collections. So many ordered the video, that I was contacted by a representative of the GOLD LABEL to express their appreciation. This, in turn, led to an exchange of letters between myself and Pat Boone, which resulted in Pat graciously accepting an honorary ICC membership. In doing so, Pat wrote to me as follows:

"...my life long admiration for Der Bingle borders on idolatry. For most of my singing career, I have consciously patterned myself after him, though no one can ever match those tones or that effortless delivery ..."

Pat also informed me that he hopes to produce a second "CROONERS" video, in which he again will spotlight Bing, and in greater depth than during the first video. Interested members can obtain a free, 45-page full color catalog from Pat's GOLD LABEL by writing to: 33 Music Square West, Suite #100, Nashville, Tennessee 37203; or telephone 1-877-728-7453.

It is a great pleasure to welcome Pat Boone to membership in the ICC, and I know that we all wish him every success with his GOLD LABEL company.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Although I am writing this article on a warm Fall afternoon in mid-October, I would like to close with best wishes from my wife, Laura, and myself to all our fellow ICC members around the world for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Even though the holiday period is not yet with us, we hope that all of you will enjoy a pleasant Winter season and a healthy and prosperous 2001.

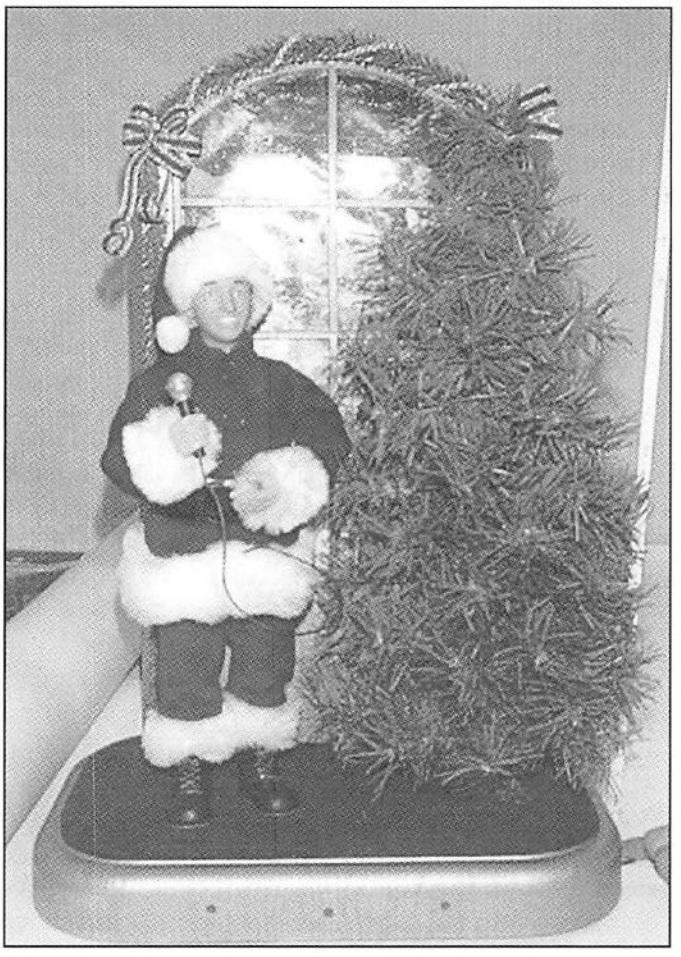
F. B. (Wig) Wiggins October 20, 2000

XMAS ORNAMENTS

After Wig had forwarded his article, Ron Cannatella from New Orleans alerted us to some more new souvenirs available to Bing fans in the USA and Canada this Christmas.

"I've enclosed a couple of scans of two new Bing Holiday dolls. The doll depicts Bing in his 'White Christmas' costume and you have the choice of having him with a Christmas Tree scene or standing next to an old time radio on a wooden base. Both dolls are animated and feature Bing's 1947 recording of 'White Christmas'."

The item shown below is being marketed by Holiday Creations and costs $49.95. Apparently Lowes' Home Improvement Centers stock it. Measuring 16-18 inches tall, it plays the whole of Bing's recording of 'White Christmas'.



BING AT WAR - 1944

There is a reasonably well-known picture of Bing entertaining servicemen in the last war which we reproduce below. At one time, we thought it had been taken at the huge Burtonwood air base in Lancashire but thanks to brilliant detective work by Ron Bosley and Chris Way we have learned that it was taken at Ridgewell Aerodrome in Essex on September 2, 1944.

Furthermore, Chris Way has discovered a book called "The Mighty Men of the 381st: - Heroes All" which is subtitled "A Chaplain's inside story on the men of the 381st. Bomber Group" and is written by Chaplain James Good Brown. The book was first published in 1984 by Publishers Press, Salt Lake City. It was written in its entirety immediately upon the happening of the events described and it has a chapter called 'Movie Actors' which is all about the celebrities who visited the base during the war. The section on Bing is fascinating and is reproduced below with grateful thanks to the author.

BING CROSBY

Bing Crosby is different. There is only one "Bing." He is a character and an American legend. One would never attempt to compare Bing Crosby with any other actor. His appearance was, of course, "staged." It was set up in a big way. It was like putting on a theatrical performance. Nothing had been done like it here before on Ridgewell Aerodrome. Nothing will be done like it again if we are to be here another two years. An all-out effort was made for his coming. He came with a troupe, not as the other movie stars who came to christen ships or just to meet the men. Bing Crosby came to stage a show. Preparations were carefully made. We did not go into the theatre building to hold the show. A stage was set up in one of the large hangars where Flying Fortresses are stored. Three Flying Fortresses will go inside one of these hangars, with doors closed.

With but few exceptions, every man on the base was present. People from the villages nearby came. Men from the hospitals on other air bases were invited, all who could hobble on crutches, and those dressed in hospital gowns. Red Cross personnel from near and far were invited. American nurses from hospitals were there. Military personnel from English bases were present. Anyone within travelling distance was permitted to come to Ridgewell Aerodrome.

It was a sight to behold, for the 381st Bomb Group was the "Big Staging Spot" for Bing Crosby's appearance in England. This was IT. The scene was electrifying, just to look through the great hangar and see this mass of humanity. People were jammed everywhere throughout the entire hangar. Men hung from the steel girders. The place looked like a monkey cage with men on the steel girders from the floor to the roof.

A huge platform, or stage, was set up at one end of the hangar, made by placing side by side immense trailers used to haul airplanes over the country-side when they are dismantled. On this stage were placed the pianos. Mikes were set up for the projection of sound throughout the huge hangar. It was in this setting that Bing Crosby appeared. The gigantic nature of the preparation was enough to set minds in anticipation. It was the kind of preparation which causes one to want to go hours ahead of time lest he miss a seat and to crowd up to the front to get the best look.

It was also the kind of gathering where advance publicity of the Hollywood variety makes people want to go just out of curiosity. And, since every man on the base was relieved from duty, no one would miss the event. In this setting, Bing Crosby arrived with his troupe consisting of musicians, pianists, accordion players, and singers. Naturally there were pretty girls with him. They sang and also went through skits with him, and there was a comedian who dialogued with him at the mike.

There was nothing novel about the dialogues; they sounded like old minstrel dialogues, the usual slapstick stuff. But it went over big with the crowd. The size of the crowd made the applause sound tremendous. The girls were not outstanding, but that made no difference to the fellows. They were girls, and that is all that mattered. And they were here. They went over big with the boys, who always love to see and hear a girl. Then, when one of the girls asks for a GI to come to the platform, and the episode ends with a big hug and kiss from her — that pleases the crowd no end. The applause is tremendous.

In the dialogue Bing merely acts as the interested questioner, the second person being the comedian. Bing maintains his dignity. He is never the comedian. Bing may be a singer, but he also knows "how to act." The success of the program was not just the fact that it was the best show to come to the base. It was Bing Crosby himself. He was the attraction. He was the limelight.

In the first place, Bing Crosby has a pleasing personality. He is at ease. He is kindly. He is sympathetic to his audience. He knows how to win his audience. He sings not merely "songs", but what is far more important, he sings "to people." How easily he will interject remarks to someone in the front row while singing, words which are not in the song at all. He is clever. He thinks fast. Then, too, he knows how to croon. At this he is the best. He still knows how to sing: " Bl-bl-bl-blues, " and bring it up from the depths of his vocal cords. He has a superb crooning voice.

I had quite a conversation with Crosby before the show began as he was waiting for the men to get the stage arranged in the proper manner. He thoroughly enjoys going around to the war camps and bases. To him, it is both fun and a patriotic duty. He feels that it is the way he can do his part in this war. Neither did I hesitate to tell him I thought he was doing as much good for the men as the chaplain.

To this he remarked, "Not quite as much good as you chaplains are doing."

James Good Brown

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

G. D. Hamann, 2365 Scarff Street, Los Angeles, California, 90007, USA. (e-mail: gdhamann@juno.com)

BING CROSBY *COVERING ALL BASES:* G. D. Hamann's latest compilation from Los Angeles newspapers covers Bing's entire career from the 1920s through the 1970s. It is one of the larger books of the series. The cost is $29.95, $3.00 S&H for United States orders, and $6.00 (Priority Mail) for foreign orders, please make foreign checks and money orders payable in U.S. funds. Other new booklets of interest are BOSWELL SISTERS In the 30's and RUSS COLUMBO *In the 30's*. These books are $15.00 each, $1.00 S&H for U.S. orders and $3.00 S&H for foreign orders.

Lars Schinnerling, Westendstr. 20, 63225 Langen, Germany (e-mail:lars.schinnerling@de.abnamro.com)

Lars offers his new book on GINNY SIMMS.

"A Discography of Records, Radio Programmes and Movies. This is a must for lovers of music from the 1940s and of Ginny Simms in particular. It contains all of her commercial recordings with Kay Kyser and as a solo artist, AFRS Basic Music Library entries, full details of her radio appearances, among those 17 with Bing Crosby, and all the movies she was in. A4 format, 119 pages, illustrated with biography and song index. Postpaid airmail delivery at GBP10.00 or DM30.00 in cash, DM30 by Eurocheque or US$20.00 (cash or check) for US orders."

Peter Costulas, 61 Woodland Rd., Fairfield, Connecticut 06432, USA (Tel: 203-374-4292, e-mail: pfsperco@aol.com)

Peter has for sale a number of Bing's 78 rpm and LP records from his collection. Included are the complete set of JONZO LP albums (1 - 13) and 60 Blue and Black Label Decca 78's. He is also offering 78's by other vocalists and big bands. Contact Peter for a listing.

Paul Morrison, Kirby Villa, Dene Crescent, Rowlands Gill, Tyne and Wear NE39 1DS

Offers invited for the following LP boxed sets, all in perfect condition:

THE VERY BEST OF BING (World Records, 7 LP set)

TOM SAWYER READ BY BING (Argo Records, 3 LP set)

TENTH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION (Warwick Records, 3 LP set)

MURRAY HILL RADIO THEATRE 4 LP SET (BING AND FRIENDS)

BING CROSBY - MCA 9284 - 86 (Japanese import) 3 LP set.

All reasonable offers considered and I will pay postage.

Ron Cannatella, e-mail:- RonnieCann@aol.com

"I am looking for the following CDs to round out my collection.

1. Feels Good, Feels Right (London 820 586-2)
2. It's Easy to Remember (Rainbow RCD 307 or 9010)
3. That Travellin' Two-Beat (EMI Axis CDAX 701597)
4. Big Band Days (Echo Jazz EJCD 12)
5. On Treasure Island (JSP Records JSPCD 703)
6. Bing Crosby - The Collection (Marks and Spencer MS4811)

I'm also looking for any of the 'Through the Years' LPs produced by the late John Joyce and any of the 'Moments to Remember' series produced by the late Bob Jones."

(Editor: Any members who can help Ron, but who do not have e-mail, can route their replies through me.)

Howard Rogofsky, P. O. Box 107, Glen Oaks, New York 11004, USA

Howard is an American periodicals dealer who has various magazines for sale from the 1930's through the 1970's which contain articles about Bing. For a listing, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Howard.

Pete Cakanic, 11 Teal Court, North Augusta, SC 298441-3276, USA

"Do you know of anyone who has a Bing LP Chronology? I'm informed that one was produced sometime back. I'd sure like to buy one. I have both of Jim Reilly's CD- listings, and they are priceless."

(Editor: The ICC did indeed produce 'The Bing Crosby LP-ography' in 1977 and anyone who has a spare copy, please contact Pete direct.)

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE

Arthur now has available a new Bing stamp at £3 per 20 inclusive of postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. Also Arthur has produced a nice Bing key ring which is shown below. This can be purchased for £2.50, direct from Arthur.

Lars Schinnerling, Westendstr. 20, 63225 Langen, Germany (e-mail:lars.schinnerling@de.abnamro.com)

"I'm desperately trying to get a copy of the following programme: July 4, 1944 A Military Musical Spectacle on the occasion of the Fourth of July, 1944, Hollywood Bowl, sponsored by The Los Angeles Times to promote sales in 5th War Loan Drive, MC: Bing Crosby; Ginny Simms, James Melton, Ella Mae Morse, 150 piece Army Air Forces Orchestra under the direction of Lt. Col. Eddie Dunstedter."

Anyone who can help please contact Lars direct.

Bert Minister, 80 Fox St., Edgeley, Stockport SK3 9JY

Bert has four of Reg Bristo's 'Golden Years' magazines (Oct 86, Jan 87, Apr 87 and July 87) which he would be happy to pass on to anyone interested. Also he offers eight Eddie Cantor LPs, mostly imports, and he asks £27 for the lot plus post or buyer collect.

H. B. Bath, 8 Gorringe Close, Lower Willingdon, Eastbourne BN20 9SU (tel. 01323 482361)

Mr. Bath would accept a reasonable price as a lot for the following LPs:

2 boxes - The Very Best of Bing
2 boxes - That's What Life Is All About
2 boxes - 10th. Anniversary Collection
2 boxes - Live at the Palladium
2 boxes - Beautiful Memories
24 assorted LPs
60 assorted tapes

John Mayall, Summer Fields, Oxford OX2 7EN (tel. 01865 559799)

John has twenty Bing 78s for disposal. He would prefer to dispose of as a job lot, ideally to someone in the Oxford area. Contact John direct.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR (tel. 0121-359-7399)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Crosby CDs (and LPs), contact Ray. You can do it all by phone and pay by credit card if you like. It couldn't be easier.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

Internet sites:
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/
The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU (phone:0121-421-7714) This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £12 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

Books 'n' Bing

1. Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years, 1903 - 1940

Gary Giddins' book is here at last - well, at least I've seen the uncorrected advance proof which was 'rushed' to me by DHL (who couldn't find my house!). What a book this is! Gary is a powerful, authoritative and honest writer and I hung on his every word as I read into the early hours in order to get this review into this issue.

The very strong opening introduction sets the scene brilliantly and a page of statistics contains almost breathtaking figures which should capture the interest of any casual reader for ever. In fact the introduction sums up the Bing we know and admire wonderfully well and puts into balance the negative publicity since his death. The introduction finishes as follows:

> Bing was a remarkably autobiographical performer. Yet while the public thought it knew him intimately, his intimates concede that Crosby was, in many respects, unknowable. They would often remark on his intelligence, humor, and generosity, and then marvel at his contradictions: the melting warmth and chilly reserve, the conservatism and liberality, the piety and recklessness. Bing liked people who made him laugh (he expressed bewilderment that anyone might think him, as many did, a loner) but avoided public displays of affection and introspection. After he lost the soulmate of his early years, guitarist Eddie Lang, he could no more have bared his soul to another man than submit to psychoanalysis. Iron-willed and self-made, insouciant and obstinate, gregarious and remote, he was thoroughly enigmatic, yet hardly

unknowable - no man with a legacy as large as Crosby's could be that. Neither saint nor monster, Crosby survives his de-bunkers along with his hagiographers because the facts are so much more impressive than the prejudices and myths on either side. Bing Crosby was, after all, a poor boy from a Catholic working-class district in turn-of-the-century Spokane who caught the attention of the world and made it better. "Call me lucky," he said. But it was never just luck or even talent. It was also the determination and brains of an alert young man who came along when American entertainment was at a crossroads. He showed it which road to take.

Detailed reviews of the family history before Bing was born follow and perhaps there was almost too much detail there as I found myself eager to read about Bing himself. However as a reference source the chapters on the Crosby and Harrigan families are unbeatable. As he tells the story of Bing's early life and then his show-business career, Gary's musical and jazz knowledge comes to the fore as he analyses in depth many of Bing's recordings. We shall all learn much from his scholarly discourses on Bing's choice (and at times, not so choice) records. Every Bing film is reviewed in amazing depth with much new information coming forward from the incredible number of people Gary has consulted over the years.

The section headed 'Notes and Sources' is remarkable in itself and contains much fascinating information. Never has a book on Bing been so thoroughly and carefully researched. Gary has had access to so many previously hidden sources it is almost mouth watering to read items such as the correspondence between Bing and his brother Ted, the memoirs of Kitty Lang (Eddie's widow) and the unpublished notes of Al Rinker.

Gary covers in depth everything of significance in Bing's life up to 1940 including such things as the break with the Rhythm Boys, the controversial first broadcast and the celebrated (and recorded) row with Jack Kapp. How nice to see these matters discussed in a balanced and logical way instead of the twisted interpretation we had in *The Hollow Man*. Gary's admiration for Louis Armstrong (highlighted in his book *Satchmo* in 1988) inevitably comes to the fore as Bing and Louis frequently influence each other in those early years. One magnificent quote half way through the book articulated what I have always thought about Bing.

> But career statistics tell only a part of the story. No other pop icon has ever been so thoroughly, lovingly liked - liked and trusted. Bing's naturalness made him credible to all, regardless of region, religion, race or gender. He was our most brilliant chameleon, mirroring successive eras - through Prohibition, depression, war, anxiety and affluence - without being dramatic about it. He was discreet and steady. He was family.

The book runs to over 700 A5 size pages and includes 32 pages of black and white photos, a discography up to July 1940 and a complete filmography. I cannot praise it too highly and at last we have the accurate in-depth assessment of Bing we have always wanted. Serial rights have been sold to Talk Magazine, and an excerpt appeared in the December - January issue which should already be on the stands. The book will be available in the shops in the USA on January 25 and will cost $30. We are investigating the possibility of special deals for ICC members and a separate insert will give details if we are successful. The publishers are Little Brown and Company, Time Life Building, 1271 Sixth Avenue, New York NY 10020 and the ISBN number is 0-316-88188-0. Gary will be making an author tour in early February taking in New York, Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Seattle and San Francisco which will tie in with his appearances on Ken Burns' PBS documentary *Jazz*.

When you have read this masterpiece you will be desperate for Volume 2 which is expected to be available in 2003 but in the meantime let me leave you with the last few words of the narrative which finishes with the release of 'Road to Singapore'.

> *Singapore* inaugurated a franchise that echoed through the culture during and after the war, persistently for more than twenty years. Until James Bond, the *Road* series was the most lucrative ever produced. For Bing, it indicated redefinition. His contemporaries had followed him for a decade; now a much younger audience was drawn to him as well. Neither Crosby nor Paramount nor, for that matter, Jack Kapp and Kraft could have imagined in 1940 that everything he had achieved would be remembered within a few short years, as merely a prelude to what followed - a bagatelle compared with the symphony of adulation he roused in the 1940s, when Bing Crosby was remade in the crucible of war.

2. Is it Me?

Radio and TV personality Terry Wogan has written a pleasant book about some of his experiences and in turn this has had some nice reviews. The Daily Mail review by Christopher Matthew began:-

"Of all the great stars Terry Wogan has interviewed, none gave him a bigger thrill than Bing Crosby, who dropped in on Terry's radio show one morning in the Seventies while he was in town recording an album with Fred Astaire.

'He was everything I knew he would be,' Wogan recalls. 'Full of bonhomie and good humour, relaxed and generous with his time.'"

The book is published by the BBC and costs £16.99

3. All of me

An autobiography by Barbara Windsor. Now a soap star in 'Eastenders', Barbara has had a very lively life and this book relates some of it. Of interest to Crosby fans is her account of a brief entanglement with Gary Crosby in March 1957. Babs speaks warmly of Gary who was very polite and charming. Just prior to his departure for Germany, Gary mentioned a possible engagement ring but she heard from him only briefly thereafter. She feels that the talk of a ring was simply a way of getting her into bed with him. Barbara says that she met Bing when he called round to congratulate her on a performance but there may be some confusion as the dates do not fit in with what we know of Bing's movements. The book is published by Headline and costs £18.99.

KEITH PARKINSON'S
CELLULOID CROSBY

In the Winter, 1999 issue of BING, I made an attempt to bring the Crosby soundtrack contributions up to date. In the last issue, Roger Osterholm wondered whether *Paradise Road* (1997) had slipped through the net. The film never made it to my multiplex when it was released in the UK and I am indebted to Editor Malcolm for the answer. Malcolm spotted the film on one of the many Sky Digital channels and watched it carefully. In fact, no Bing songs were in evidence although at one point, one of the lady prisoners of the Japanese says "I wonder what Bing Crosby is doing now?" However two other films were omitted from the 1990s and the year 2000 brought a further reminder of how useful film makers find Bing's recordings when they attempt to bring a feeling for the era to a scene. The three additions are:

Henry and June (1990). Based on the time literary giants Henry Miller and Anais Nin spent in Paris in 1931. The selection of contemporary recordings used indicates that director Philip Kaufman researched the music of the period well. Bing is heard singing 'I Found a Million Dollar Baby', a recording he made in middle of the year in question.

Enemy of the State (1998). An intelligent thriller set in the USA at the end of the last century, the underlying theme of this Touchstone Picture is the extent of technology's ability to invade privacy. Will Smith plays an innocent citizen sucked into a web of political corruption. His financial background is distorted and his marriage all but destroyed by the State's ability to change lives. But good triumphs over evil and against all the odds the final scene sees Smith united with his wife and family. So it is very appropriate that as the end credits roll we hear Bing's 1947 Decca recording of 'They Can't Take That Away From Me'.

Snow Falling on Cedars (2000). The film is set around 1950 but a flashback sequence returns us to 1942. The editor of a small town local paper has published an editorial sympathetic to the Japanese community. He is telling his son about the number of readers who have cancelled the paper because of that editorial. In the background we hear Bing's 1936 Decca recording of 'Would You' being played over the radio.

Fred Reynold's book 'The Road to Hollywood" reveals that Greta Garbo was suggested as Bing's female lead in *The Emperor Waltz* (1948). If the publicity of the time is to be believed she professed to never having heard of Crosby. Screenwriter's Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder had to lay on a special screening of *Going My Way* to acquaint her with America's biggest box-office star. Even then she turned the part down, which was probably for

Bing sings to the 'Friendly Mountains'

the better as Joan Fontaine was nearer the right age for playing romantic interest Countess Johanna.

During its development the film was known as *The Countess of Luxemburg*. The film was directed by Billy Wilder. Amongst other projects, he had made two rather grim films for Paramount - *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *Lost Weekend* (1946) - and he was anxious to tackle a more light-hearted subject, if only to please himself. He said, 'I kind of thought it would be fun to make a musical. I have no talent for a musical, because I can't get it into my head that people break into a song for no reason whatsoever. So I was handicapped there; I was not up to making a musical ..... after being in Germany and cutting an hour-and-a-half documentary about the concentration camps in London. So I was kind of very eager to do something on the more frivolous side. But *The Emperor Waltz* just was no good, it just did not come off."

At the time the project was first being considered by Paramount, in the winter of 1945, Bing was about to have a massive Christmas hit with *The Bells of St. Mary's*. Then *Blue Skies* and *Welcome Stranger* intervened before *The Emperor Waltz* went before the cameras in June, 1946. Filming commenced on location in Canada's Jasper National Park. Jasper doubled for the Austrian Tyrol, the setting for the movie which was set in 1901. The background splendour of Jasper added to the overall lustre of Bing's third Technicolor film, even though the five week location shoot only resulted in one week's worth of film due to rainy weather. This did not overly concern Bing. He had a willing tennis partner in Charles Brackett and the location was convenient for fishing and golfing when he wasn't on call.

The delay in shooting exteriors was of concern to Paramount because of a threatened shut-down of Hollywood studios at the end of September. During the middle of that month the cast worked every night for a week through to the early hours of the following morning in order to complete filming before strike action could affect it. As it happens, there was no urgency for its completion because it was not premiered in the USA until almost two years elapsed. The wait was even longer in the UK due to political tampering by the Labour government. After the war they imposed an import tax which meant that non-British films were subjected to an 'ad valorem' duty. Hollywood reacted by withholding new product from the UK starting late 1947. This resulted in the tax being withdrawn on May 3rd, 1948. A flood of quality films then became available. The three major circuits - ABC, Odeon and Gaumont - could not give the backlog adequate release slots. Paramount's usual releasing arrangements gave Odeon first refusal but the studio misread market conditions and wanted more expensive terms than usual. They were not in a good bargaining position because Rank, which controlled both the Odeon and Gaumont circuits, were aware that the film had been on the shelf in the USA for a considerable time because Paramount were less certain than usual about a Crosby movie. Paramount then looked elsewhere and the mid-sized Granada group seized upon the offer to show *The Emperor Waltz*. Bing's studio knew they were limiting the number of cinemas able to screen the latest Crosby and they worded their advertisements accordingly. 'It may not be at your local cinema ..... but it will be in your district', the copy read.

In the USA Paramount tried to heighten public awareness of the film by arranging a tie-in with the John B. Stetson Company, the well known hat manufacturers. A differently attired Bing was pictured each side of a startled lady. "Can't both be Bing Crosby", was the ad's caption. It then went on to perpetrate what must be one of the most blatant advertising mis-statements of all time. 'Bing Crosby is one of Hollywood's best-dressed men. You need neither fame nor fortune to be as well-dressed as Bing. Merely pick what you wear carefully, to suit the occasion. Then top it off with the right Stetson'. Admittedly, the two Bings in the accompanying illustration were impeccably turned out. But it was from a painting by Clayton Underhill, not an example of trick photography.

Can't both be Bing Crosby!
Leaving the airport, Bing wears...
And meeting friends for dinner...
Dress for the occasion with— STETSON HATS

And Bing's character in *The Emperor Waltz* was far removed from a Stetson wearing type. The Crosby image had been used to shift several products but the previous year a more appropriate campaign was used by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). They used national magazines to promote Bing's Philco Radio Time during its first season. Their copy was more honest than Stetson's. "The most popular man alive. That's what Bing Crosby was voted in a recent nation-wide poll. On his sparkling new variety show Bing's at his tip top best."

Billy Wilder co-wrote and directed *The Emperor Waltz*. In an interview in the late 1980s he said, "I never want to see it again'. He has not moderated his view since. He will only talk about the film when pushed. He's heading for his 94th birthday but his recall is good. He was interviewed by film director Cameron Crowe over several months and Crowe had to keep returning to the subject of *The Emperor Waltz* in order to elicit the briefest comment about the film. Wilder mimed great pain when he said, "It came out of a bravado gesture that I made in a meeting of the front office. They did not have

a good picture for Bing Crosby. And I just said, 'Why don't we just make a musical!' And we were not happy with Joan Fontaine. We had nothing. I was just improvising there. The less time to consume in analysing *The Emperor Waltz,* you know, the better. There's nothing to explain, there's nothing to read into that thing." Crowe refused to let the matter drop and returned to the film at a later date to persuade Wilder to make a further comment on the subject. "The less said about this the better." He described it as a favour to Paramount and put the lid on the issue once and for all by saying, 'No good deed goes unpunished." Crowe also asked Wilder about Frank Sinatra, to which he replied: 'He's not an actor. I liked him as a singer, though to me Bing Crosby was the great stylist. Crosby was the artist."

The fact that Paramount held onto the film so long before releasing it is an indicator of their nervousness about its appeal. In May of 1948 they threw a party after its Los Angeles premiere and persuaded the usually reluctant Bing to attend in the company of Dixie. The typical Crosby attitude to promoting one of his films was usually restricted to frequent mentions on his radio programme. He avoided the Hollywood hoopla which required high profile appearances at publicity parties which were usually excuses for a few photographs to be taken to accompany newspaper and magazine articles. These provided several column inches of free advertising to benefit the studios. *The Emperor Waltz* eventually went into profit for Paramount. Seeing it today, it avoids seeming dated because it was already set in a fairy-tale land fifty years removed from the time it was made. Now it is distanced by a similar time scale for those wanting to escape the cynicism of films of the early twenty first century. You'll never encounter a scene as magical as Bing singing 'The Friendly Mountains' in anything made today. Contemporary reviewers may not have found much to rave about at the time but they recognised that Bing's latest would please the public at which it was aimed. One 1948 review ended with the remark, "Paramount has nothing to worry about. The film may falter on occasion but it adds up to a sure-fire hit." Present day reviewers recognise *The Emperor Waltz* for what it is. I can't improve on Derek Winnert's assessment so I'll end with his comments: "Sets, costumes, Bing's trilling, the support, Wilder and Brackett's writing: they're all top class. Crosby's knees do look funny in lederhosen though."

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

LEWIS, ROBERT (1909-1997) American theatre director. As far as I can trace, Lewis only directed one film. That was *Anything Goes* (1956). When he died his obituaries stressed the part he had played in raising the profile of acting on the American stage. He was a founding member of The Group Theatre in the 1930s and co-founder of the Actors' Studio in 1948. He did not quite conform to the adage "those who can do, those who can't teach' because he'd had acting experience in films since 1943 when he was in *Paris After Dark*. He appeared in a handful of films in the 'forties, the best remembered of which are *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946) and *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947).

LIFE IS SO PECULIAR Song. When Burke and Van Heusen wrote the songs for *Mr. Music* (1950), it can't be said that they delivered one of their more memorable scores. The strongest song proved to be "Life is so Peculiar', made more memorable because it was featured three times, twice as a duet by Bing. At a party Bing is joined by Peggy Lee to give the song its initial outing. Later on it returns in a scene when Bing's character in the film is presenting his new show at a college. The Merry Macs sing it and then Bing and Groucho Marx give it a go.

LILLEY, JOSEPH J (1913-) Vocal coach who progressed to musical director. He made his first contact with Bing in 1942 when he received an on-screen credit as vocal arranger for *Holiday Inn*. He was similarly employed on *Star Spangled Rhythm* (1942), *Dixie* (1943), *Going My Way* (1944), *Here Come the WAVES* (1944), *Road To Utopia* (1946), *Blue Skies* (1946), and *Welcome Stranger* (1947). His first credit as Musical Director was shared with Troy Sanders on *Variety Girl* (1947), when the musical score was also attributed to him. On *The Emperor Waltz* the following year it was back to vocal arranger although he grabbed some song writing royalties by adapting a traditional Swiss melody for the charming "The Friendly Mountains' to fit Johnny Burke's lyrics. *Road to Rio* (1948), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1948), *Top o' the Morning* (1949), *Riding High* (1950) and *Mr. Music* (1950) all resulted in vocal arranger credit. *Just for You* (1952) saw a further vocal arrangement credit sandwiched in between *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) and *Road to Bali* (1953), where he was again listed as musical director. His final credits for Crosby movies were for musical direction again on *White Christmas* (1954) and *Anything Goes* (1956). By then Bing had started to use him on television assignments. He'd been used for the television film *High Tor* (1955), when he arranged the music for this Arthur Schwartz-Maxwell Anderson collaboration. After that Bing ensured he was assigned as vocal arranger for the singer's one hour specials. Chances are, if you listened to the radio in the USA during the 1940s then you would here the announcement "Vocal arrangements and orchestrations by Joseph Lilley" at least once a week. Lilley worked on radio with Rudy Vallee, Kate Smith, Paul Whiteman, Lanny Ross and Alec Templeton. Similarly, if you saw a Paramount Picture in the 1950s, vocal arrangements were down to Lilley when it was a Martin and Lewis, Bob Hope, or Guy Mitchell film shot for that studio. This is a lengthy entry for a small cog in a big wheel, but Joseph J. Lilley was an important behind the scenes force when it came to Bing, movies and music during ten key years of Crosby at Paramount.

LILLIE, BEATRICE (1894-1989) Canadian born comedienne/actress who made her mark with Crosby followers in one film, *Doctor Rhythm* (1938), when she played the ditzy Lorelei Dodge-Blodgett. It provided an opportunity for her to perform her set piece involving a double dozen double damask

Groucho Marx and Bing agree that 'Life is So Peculiar

dinner napkins, a sketch she performed on Bing's radio show some ten years later. In fact, she was a regular on Bing's various shows between 1947 and 1950. She only made seven films, rationing herself to one a decade after *Doctor Rhythm*. They were *On Approval* (1944), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956) and *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967). Between times she was one of those personalities famous for being famous because of the company she kept. Noel Coward, Winston Churchill, George Bernard Shaw and Charlie Chaplin were listed as intimate friends. Her autobiography, 'Every Other Inch a Lady" was published in 1972.

LINDON, LIONEL (1905-1971) Director of Photography. Another backroom boy in the Joseph Lilley category. He was under long term contract to Paramount since forging a link with that company in 1923 when he was assistant to director Cecil B DeMille on the silent version of *The Ten Commandments*. His Crosby pictures were shot in the 1940s from *Going My Way* (1944) to *Top o' the Morning* (1949). The ones in between were *Duffy's Tavern* (1945), *Road to Utopia* (1946), *Welcome Stranger* (1947) and *Variety Girl* (1947). He received an Academy Award for his cinematography on *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956) and continued working on major Hollywood shot films until two years before his death.

LINDSAY, HOWARD (1889-1968) American actor-playwright-stage director. It's Lindsay's writing skills which earn him an entry here. He adapted a novel by Edward Hope into the play on which Bing's 1934 film *She Loves Me Not* was based. That same year he collaborated with Russell Crouse and Cole Porter on the musical *Anything Goes* which Bing filmed twice, in 1936 and 1956. His acting and directing careers were in the silent movie days.

LITTLE BIT OF HEAVEN, A Song. You could easily miss Bing singing a snatch of this Ernest R. Ball-J. Keirn Brennan sentimental Irish ballad. It was featured in *I Surrender Dear*, a 1931 Mack Sennett short. In the film, Bing tries to soothe an Irishman whose wife has been mistaken for a girl Bing is seeking. The same scene was featured in the 1946

compilation *Road to Hollywood*, which raided the Sennett vaults and stitched together four of Bing's early thirties short films.

LITTLE BOY LOST Film. In the autumn/winter of 1952, Bing spent time in France working on this somewhat sombre Paramount film before returning to Hollywood to put the finishing touches to it. It was released in the autumn of 1953 to mild critical acclaim. It was an early example of Bing flexing his acting muscles as opposed to the typical light Crosby screen vehicle we had grown to expect. Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen wrote two 'French" and one typical Crosby-type ballad for Bing to sing during the film's 95 minutes. The film would have played just as well without the crooning but Paramount were no doubt unsure of foisting a Bing picture on his loyal public without including a song or two. Typical Bing fare had been released by the studio at the beginning of the year in the form of *Road to Bali*. Surprisingly, both films did identical box office business with North American rentals of $3 million. At the year end they shared joint 19th position in Variety's top twenty money making films of 1953.

LITTLE ONE Song. We all have our favourite songs from Bing's last musical of note. Nine Cole Porter compositions featured in *High Society* (1956) and there's little to choose between them. They are all memorable. "Little One' is sung by Bing to Lydia Reed, who plays Grace Kelly's little sister in the film. Louis Armstrong's trumpet helps out on this strong ballad and the song is picked up later in the story by Lydia Reed who does her best to sing it in French.

LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE, THE Song. Irving Berlin wrote the words and music to the twenty plus songs used in the 1946 Paramount Picture *Blue Skies*. It was inevitable that time would prevent a full treatment of all the numbers and "The Little Things in Life" is featured in a medley of three songs which Bing is heard to sing over a montage of shots depicting night clubs he has owned. In 1930 Bing recorded the song for RCA-Victor and he did not attempt to provide Decca with an updated version when he selected nine songs to record to coincide with the film's release.

LITTLE WHITE PILL ON THE LITTLE GREEN HILL, THE Song. The 1940 short *Swing with Bing* was a personal project of Bing's. It promoted his favourite sport: golf. He asked Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco to provide a song. 'Little White Pill...' was unlikely to sell very many copies for Decca if it was recorded for sale on the open market and its only off-screen availability is on an Australian produced LP of soundtrack songs.

LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME Song. The CBS musical *High Tor* was shot on film in the November of 1955 and Decca released an album of the songs. All were written by Maxwell Anderson and Arthur Schwartz. All the songs were philosophical in tone.

TOP STARS OF ALL-TIME

A concern called tlavideo.com published an interesting list recently on the Internet of the top box office stars at the cinema based on estimated ticket sales over the years. This makes fascinating reading and the top ten are:

	Star	***Estimated ticket sales***
1.	Clark Gable	1,168,300,000
2.	John Wayne	1,114,000,000
3.	Bing Crosby	1,077,900,000
4.	James Stewart	981,900,000
5.	Cary Grant	942,500,000
6.	Spencer Tracy	937,200,000
7.	Gary Cooper	878,600,000
8.	Mickey Rooney	867,900,000
9.	Harrison Ford	852,700,000
10.	Gregory Peck	728,000,000

We have no details as to how the figures were calculated but it is nice to see Bing up there in the top three. Cinema admissions were of course much higher in the years before television which perhaps helps to explain why so few of today's stars are in the top ten. For instance, Sean Connery is number 27, Clint Eastwood number 47 and Robert Redford is number 50. Clark Gable's top position must owe much to the incredible success of 'Gone With The Wind' without discounting the many successful films he made.

TIME MARCHES BACK

Yesterday's News from Entertainment magazines. Jim Newell has sent us a further collection of clippings from his huge collection.

20th June, 1935 - Film Pictorial.

The Bing Crosby and Neil Hamilton "Fan" clubs cordially invite all to join. Full particulars can be had from the Foreign Secretary, Dorrie Hunt, 21 Sandy Lane South, Wallington, Surrey. The clubs are personally supervised and backed by Bing and Neil.

(Jim: Have we in the club today anyone who is 'young' enough to remember either of the above clubs and also who was Neil Hamilton ?)

4th April, 1936 - Radio Review. (on the letters page)
CONCERNING CROONERS.

Discussions at the moment seem to involve all crooners, so perhaps my views would be of interest. George Barclay is, in my opinion, absolutely unsurpassed among British vocalists. Roy Fox maintains that Denny Dennis is the best, but when I listen to him it seems to me he is nothing more than an imitation of "He Who Is Greatest Of Them All." .... Before I close I would here like to make my respects to Bing Crosby, the greatest singer of popular songs in the world. I have seen all his films since "We're Not Dressing," on the very first night they have been in England and my gramophone cupboard is packed with his records.

G.B. (Battersea, London. S.W. 8)

In Answer To Anti-Crooning Fans. I read from your fan mail that many readers dislike crooners. Why that is so I cannot fathom. Think of the songs of nowadays being sung "straight"! Why, they would sound meaningless. For a tune with feeling, give me crooners every time. I should

like you to publish this, to prove to Anti-crooners that there is still a lot of listeners who enjoy crooning better than straight singing.

T.D.G.R. (Liverpool, 13).

1st January, 1938 - Picture Show.

Bing Crosby is president of the most exclusive club in the film colony. So exclusive is it that all the members are officers - Charles Starret, vice-president ; Richard Dix, secretary ; Lawrence Tibbett, treasurer. There are no official meetings and, consequently, there are no minutes. And no dues are collected at the meetings which they don't have. The sole aim of the club is to increase its membership, but no actor even cares to be eligible. The sole entrance requirement is that the fellow has to be the Father of Twins.

17th December, 1938 - Picturegoer Weekly.

Anyone interested in Bing Crosby who lives in or near Birmingham should write to Tom Evans, 109 Temple Road, Willenhall, Staffs, for full particulars of the Birmingham branch of the Bing Crosby Fan Club. The London Secretary of this club is Ted Mole, 47 Craven Gardens, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex.

(Jim: In the last issue of BING, I quoted from a 1936 article about Bing and kissing ..... 8 Years later we find...)

30th December, 1944 - Picture Show.

"Going My Way," starring Bing Crosby is one of the most human pictures Hollywood has ever made. Yet it is a picture without a single romantic kiss. Kiss-minded directors have been asked if they believe this is an indication that the kiss is on its way out. And almost in unison the cry "No!" and assert that "Going My Way" is a freak in that respect.

15th May, 1948 - Picture Show and Film Pictorial.

Walt Disney has, I hear, signed Bing Crosby and his four young sons, Philip, Gary, Dennis and Lindsay, for a sequence in "Two Fabulous Characters" based partly on Washington Irving's Ichabod Crane hero of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and partly on Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows." Bing Crosby will sing and narrate, not appearing on the screen, but the children will be seen in a Hollowe'en scene, listening to their father's voice on the radio. They will also sing and harmonise.

14th September, 1957 - Picturegoer.
Crosby Gets The Credit.

There's a story behind the music behind the credits of "Man On Fire." This is the title of the forthcoming MGM picture starring Bing Crosby and Inger Stevens. Though picturegoers will hear Crosby singing the title tune during those "produced by, directed by" preliminaries, Bing didn't in fact do any warbling at all for the film. Explanation? Producer Sol C Siegel at first brought in the Ames Brothers to do the credit-title number. And they did it well. But at about the same time the Old Groaner decided to put the tune on Capitol disc. And when Sol Siegel heard the maestro's version. he decided to record from the disc on to the film sound track. The Ames Brothers effort wasn't jettisoned however. It was used later on in the picture. The number of the Capitol disc that Bing cut? CL14761. And this record is something of a novelty. For it's not a case of being the disc from the soundtrack.

5th April, 1958 - Picture Show & Film Pictorial,

The fact that Kathryn Grant, the actress, is now Mrs. Bing Crosby is not going to have any effect on Kathryn Grant. The brown-eyed beauty from West Columbia, Texas, sees no reason why she can't continue her career, in spite of the fact that she's the bride of one of the famous men of the day. "I'm still Kathryn Grant, and also Mrs. Bing Crosby, that's the way of it," Kathy said on the set of Columbia (note, Not Paramount) Pictures "Gunman's Walk," in which she co-stars with Van Heflin, Tab Hunter and James Darren. "I'm a girl from a small Texas town and came to Hollywood to become an actress. I've always wanted to be an actress, and now I'm succeeding I wouldn't want to give it up, at least not right now."

Kathryn Grant, known for her common sense and level-headedness in a community where not all young actresses have the admirable qualities, adds that Bing Crosby himself has never indicated that he wants her to give up the work she loves.

"If my work made it impossible for me to be a good wife, believe me I would quit. Bing will always come first and my career second. It couldn't be any other way and I wouldn't have it any other way. But the studio - Columbia - has been so wonderful and patient with me that I feel I owe it to them to continue, if for no other reason. There is also the fact that I love motion pictures and that I have a lot of nervous energy which I can't work off in just doing housewifely chores. We got a new vacuum cleaner the other day and I was thrilled pushing it around vigorously. But how long would it last ? So, for the present anyway, I intend to continue my two careers, being Kathryn Grant, the actress and Mrs. Bing Crosby. I am sure one will never interfere with the other. "

7th November, 1959 - Picture Show & TV Mirror.

LP Bing Crosby: Buddies and Beaus on Brunswick LAT8306. Back to normal prices and to the reliable Bing, who never fails to produce the goods. This is, in the main, a reissue disc, but what reissues! Bing with Fred Astaire or Al Jolson, Mary Martin or Jane Wyman, and of course Bob Hope. A friendly warm disc, which I for one will be playing this Christmas.

(Jim: Does anyone know about 'Back to normal prices' ? Having started work at the tender age of 14 in 1946 and although by now I am well past my 'sell by' date I am still working part time. Over fifty years repairing office machines. Why mention this, well it fits in nicely with what comes next.)

13th August, 1960 - Picture Show and TV Mirror.

Practising on a crossbar in a men's gymnasium was Bing Crosby, going through rehearsals for a scene in "High Time." in which he plays a 51-year-old millionaire who goes to college.

"Mr Crosby, don't you feel undignified doing this kind of stuff?" asked a feminine visitor.

"Madam," replied Crosby, " I have never found making a living undignified!"

Jim Newell

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Tony Winter, Glenwood, Newbridge Hill, Gunnislake, Cornwall PL18 9JH

I was full of nostalgia (for more than one reason) when I saw the photos of Bing at Cockermouth in the Summer issue. The reason being that my first wife (who died in the 1970s) and I were staying at the Trout Hotel at Cockermouth in 1966 when Bing was fishing there.

I recall vividly my (then) wife and I going into the bar early one evening for a drink before dinner. There was only one person in the bar, a man sitting on a bar stool in the corner reading a fishing magazine. We ordered our drinks and sat down at a table. After a few moments I heard this American voice talking to the barman, instinctively I looked up and then did a 'double take'! I said to my wife, "That is surely Bing Crosby." She agreed and knowing my love of the Crosby voice said "Don't intrude." I took her advice and after 10 minutes or so he left the bar. I immediately said to the barman "that surely was Bing Crosby?" He assured me that it was and begged us not to approach him as he valued his privacy whilst being on such a vacation and was grateful for the Hotel's efforts in ensuring a 'private and quiet trip.'

We left the following morning after a late breakfast without another 'sighting'. Sadly my next 'sighting', all those years later was at the London Palladium just two weeks before his death on the Spanish golf course.

Incidentally I was quite surprised that you didn't carry an obituary of **Robert Musel** who died last year. He was a rare combination of journalist and song writer. During WWII he was second only in reputation to the great Ed Murrow. He was also a confidante of President and Mrs. Roosevelt. In fact Mrs. Roosevelt entrusted him to be the first person to inform Winston Churchill of the President's death. He covered Europe after the D-Day landings and apparently it was he who coined the name of 'Der Bingle' and also 'Elvis the Pelvis'. He knew them both well and was an admirer of both Bing and Elvis, not least Bing's efforts during the war in entertaining the troops.

(Editor: Wow! Just imagine being in a bar with Bing and not having a chat with him. I don't know whether I could have been as tactful as Tony but all credit to him. Bing would have appreciated being able to have a quiet drink in the bar without being 'pestered'. Tony's information about Robert Musel was new to me too and I had always wondered who christened Bing as 'Der Bingle'.)

Tom Bertino, San Rafael, California, USA

Well, here I am, a new member, signed up by way of Wig's diligence. I am very happy to be here! I have been a dedicated fan of Bing's since roughly the age of 13 (I'm 41 now...you do the math) and have never had much of a circle with whom to share my enthusiasm. It looks like that has now changed in a big way!

Due to my recent addition to the ranks, I have only been fortunate enough to devour two issues of BING, but there are a couple of topics that seem to come up repeatedly, and I would like to address them from my own perspective.

First there is the Sinatra-Crosby rivalry or, more particularly, the "younger generation's" readiness to embrace Sinatra as an icon while Bing is put in mothballs. The thought has been floated in the magazine that Frank's swaggering, "in-your-face" attitude has more relevance to postmodern youth. I don't doubt that this is so, but I believe another factor is at work as well. Working as I do with many folks in their 20s, I observe a heavy irony involved in much of what they embrace. Many seem to laugh at entertainment or music at the same time they're enjoying it, and I see this attitude at work in those who go for Sinatra. While they may genuinely enjoy his voice, a great deal of the appeal has to do with shaking their heads over the whole tough-guy, Rat Pack thing...it's at least as much about the man's facade as it is about his art. In this way, Frank provides a kind of obvious "entertainment" that Bing never could. In Bing's case, it's ALL about his art, (deceptively) simple and direct, with no place for irony to enter in. (Lest I be misunderstood, please know that I'm not denigrating Sinatra. I'm a HUGE Sinatra fan. I'm just aware that a lot of his followers are drawn to him without really understanding his artistic accomplishments.)

The other issue is the need to defend Bing's "decency". I was surprised to find that this wasn't laid to rest long ago. To that end, I can only weigh in with my own "Bing story". While I was fortunate in seeing Bing perform live on a few occasions, I met him but once. He was due to sing at the Concord Pavilion in California when I was 18 or so (Even then, being a Bing adulator was not de rigeur for someone my age). I had a lady friend who was a photographer for the local paper. She called me that afternoon and said, "Get the next train over here and don't ask questions. You're meeting Bing Crosby!" Needless to say, in record time I was at the Pavilion in the company of my friend, wearing a slightly false press badge, to witness Bing's rehearsal! I can't, even at this late date, express the thrill. At last the great man took a break, and my friend pushed me up and introduced me. Fully expecting a greeting only as courteous or long as necessary, I was quite floored by the cordiality this legend exhibited toward a stammering kid like myself. He asked me about myself, and chatted amiably. When I timidly proffered a test pressing of Arnheim's "One More Time" that I had had the presence of mind to bring along in hopes of an autograph, his face lit up with delight and he launched into an impromptu, a capella version of the song, a song he certainly hadn't sung in decades! My point? That in my experience, Bing Crosby was not only a kind, decent and amiable man, but far more so than a

person of his stature would ever need to be for mere "PR" purposes. I was also lucky enough to spend the balance of the afternoon sitting and chatting with daughter Mary, a lady of real class whose love for her father was more than evident. The look of rapt concentration on her face as we sat listening to that beautiful voice was a prime treasure in a day of treasures.

And yes, thanks to my friend, I have a photo to prove it!

Anyway, I'm really impressed with what the organization is doing on behalf of one of the true immortals, and I'm very pleased to stand up and be counted!

(Editor: Welcome aboard Tom and we have great pleasure in reproducing the photo of his meeting with Bing.)

Ron Field, P.O. Box 188, Bermagui, NSW 2546, Australia.

The TV Guide for July 3 in the Sydney Morning Herald carried the following..

PayTV highlights.
The Magic of Bing Crosby
Ovation, 5pm.

Bing Crosby described himself as a singer with an "average voice". Although people interviewed for this program - the likes of Rosemary Clooney, Michael Feinstein and Kathy Crosby - would disagree, it is almost certain that Crosby's fame and success relied on his effortless delivery. This is a program which is about 90 per cent singing and 10 percent analysis. Sit back and listen to Bing sing blues, gospel (with a white male backing group), country, jazz (with Louis Armstrong) and Christmas carols. It all looks so easy and relaxed that you marvel at the subtlety of his style.

Bruce Elder.

Nice preview don't you agree? Another preview in the 'Guide' in October showed:-

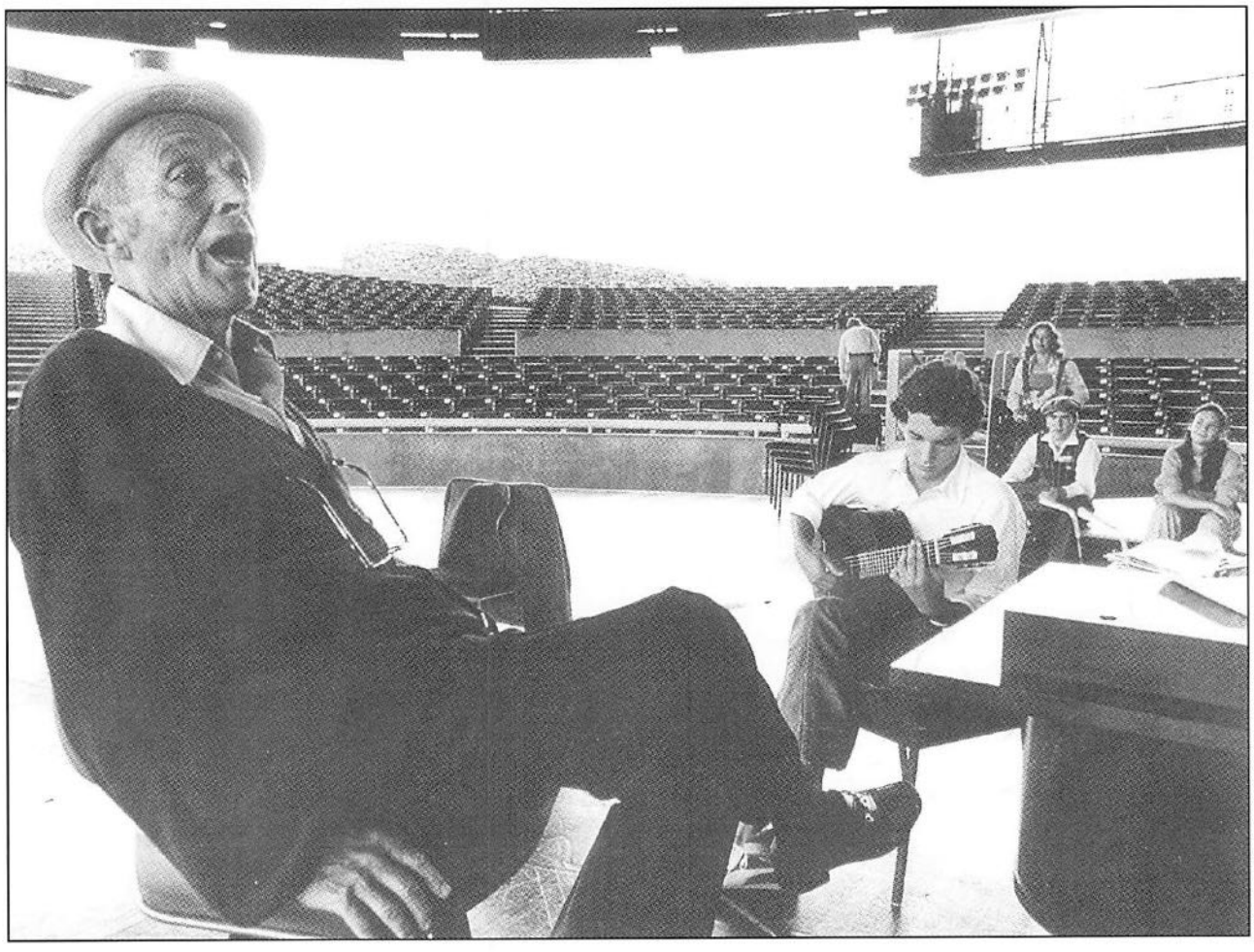
Thursday 12th. October.
Bing Crosby
Ovation, 7.30pm

As soon as you see that this is subtitled "America's crooner', you know it's going to be a glowing tribute. Oh sure, there's a little interview with son Gary, who reveals that Bing's first wife, Dixie, became a lonely alcoholic and that Bing used to beat his kids till he drew blood, but the rest of the time he was singing 'White Christmas' and making a lot of people very happy. If you're one of those, you'll love this film.

Jane Freeman

Will advise Jane about Phillip Crosby's views. Nice to know this is coming on just a few days before the anniversary.

(Editor: Good to hear about these shows from Ron. We seldom get much news from Australia which is surprising as there are so many Bing fans there and



Bing at Concord watched by Tom Bertino.

Crosby films must be shown on occasion. May I therefore encourage our Australian readers to keep us up to date with developments.)

Michael Collins, P.O. Box 2030, Flagler Beach, FL 32136 U.S.A.

Every so often I take a break from the unrelenting perfection of the compact disc and go back to the less predictable charms of my old vinyl collection. The other day I picked out, more or less at random, a compilation of KMH shows, entitled *Bing in the Thirties,* issued in 1984 by Spokane Records with sleeve notes by Will Friedwald. That same year Jasmine put out, under an almost identical title, a similar collection though with considerably better sound quality and an introduction by the estimable Geoff Milne. But it was Friedwald's notes which caught my attention. Here is what he wrote in the opening paragraph.

> *When the history of world culture is written, Bing Crosby will go down in the record as more than the greatest of popular singers, but as a milestone in the development of western music, of no less importance than Frederick Chopin or a Charlie Parker.*

Exaggerated claims? Well, that rather depends on your point of view. However, I am less concerned here with the validity of his assertion than with the depth of his convictions. His is a name which, by now, will be familiar to readers of these pages. In 1990 he published *Jazz Singing*, a book which ran to 477 pages, in which he claimed that Armstrong and Crosby were the two most important seminal influences on popular singing in the Twentieth Century. Five years later he brought out an even more extensive volume, *Sinatra! The Song is You.* Curiously, by this time his opinions and allegiances appear to have shifted. *Sinatra has now become "the definitive voice of the American experience". Friedwald ends his lengthy exposition of 557 pages with the expressed hope (and with glasses raised) that "the last voice we hear be his."

*[*Consistency is not Friedwald's strongest suit. On P.317 of 'Jazz Singing' he points out that, although Sinatra's name ends with a vowel, he is not an Italian but quintessentially American singer whose connection with classical European forms is tenuous at best. The paragraph ends: "As he said to Sidney Zion, 'I was never a great fan of classical music.'"*

On P.21 of 'Sinatra! The Song is You' he makes almost exactly the opposite point, this time ending with a quotation from a friend of the singer, Eleanor Slatkin. "Every time we went to his house, he always had classical music on. I don't remember hearing anything but classical and opera."]

I was in London when the shocking news of Bing's passing came over the airwaves. Shattered as we were by this announcement, we were at the same time secretly gratified that the BBC should honour "our man" by breaking into normal broadcasting schedules. Small consolation in the circumstances, but worth mentioning all the same. Twenty-one years later, on the other side of the Atlantic, I found that it was not just a question of normal broadcasts being interrupted; several cable channels had devoted their entire schedules to marking the death of Frank Sinatra. Among the assembled gurus, one of the most prominent was Mr. Friedwald. I watched and listened in a desultory way. I only heard him make occasional mention of Bing and when he did it was just in passing, as an influence on the evolution of the Greatest Popular Singer of the Twentieth Century.

Hard to know what to make of all this. Perhaps, sleeve or liner notes only deserve the same level of credence as opinion polls. These, we are told, are not meant to convey enduring verities. Rather are they to be taken as "snapshots" of how a particular cross-section of the population feel about a particular person or issue on a given day. As in the case of the south-west wind, things may well have changed dramatically by this time tomorrow. Still, I do wish to make what I hope is a more timely, though related, point.

A few years ago, a journalist referring to the intellectual repositioning that often goes on (and not only in the music business), remarked, "Here one senses the almost audible shuffle of feet going into reverse." As I write, the world is poised in eager expectation of the publication of Gary Giddins's biography. I hope it gets the coverage it deserves and, barring some intervening catastrophe or momentous scandal, it should. Yet, these eventualities cannot be discounted. C. S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley had the misfortune to die on the very day that Kennedy was shot. Either would have made headlines under normal circumstances; as it turned out, both were figuratively buried in the back pages. If all goes according to plan, the publication ought, as you say in your editorial, to give the ICC a marvellous lift in terms of publicity. I also predict that a good deal of repositioning among critics will take place in its wake. This should be fun to watch and even listen to (that is if the collective shuffling should ever become audible).

Congratulations on the latest issue of BING! It keeps getting better and better.

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX.

With reference to two items in BING 125:-

If it is any consolation to Gary Giddins, there was in an appreciation society magazine the unassailable description - **Barbra Strident.**

Noted (on an LP record sleeve - I think?) a quote by Count Basie! "....when Bing and Louis get together there is magic."

The basics do not change.

Regularly in BING magazine are lists of choices of Bing's records. Most of them are acceptable by Bing enthusiasts but most enthusiasts have their own lists of preferences which is how it should be with the vast treasure house of Bing's recordings.

However a just need for a list of a suggested collection of recordings which have infrequently appeared on CD or not at all would contain some rare ones. Here are some suggestions.

BLUE PRELUDE 1933: Bing flowing lyrically in his early days.

BLAME IT ON MY YOUTH 1934: This one Oscar Levant hit not played much.
WOULD YOU 1936: The charming Brown/Freed song with Bing's voice at one of his peaks.
A BLUES SERENADE 1938: I do not think I have heard this.
I CRIED FOR YOU 1938: An unlikely choice but one of Bing's best.
S'POSIN' 1939: Another very pleasant one: Perry Como also sang this well.
MARCHETA 1940: For reasons unknown I cannot resist this.
THESE FOOLISH THINGS 1944: It would be good to have this fine English classic song.
BAIA 1945: This is a real unusual one. Instead of John Scott Trotter, Bing has Xavier Cugat with a really sparkling rhythmic accompaniment.
WHO'S SORRY NOW 1945: For me this should have been the representative anthem for the passing of the last century. I have liked this song even more since a few years ago I read a newspaper report of a woman in Tasmania who danced on her husband's grave and sang this song. She was fined and imprisoned for this act.
WE'LL GATHER LILACS 1945: It would be nice to have this Ivor Novello classic.
WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED 1946: A few years ago Richard Baker on Radio 3 inserted this unexpectedly and said he played it because Bing was accompanied by one of the great American violin virtuosi of the time — Jascha Heifetz.
HAUNTED HEART 1947 A neglected song. If memory is right - it is from a collaboration of Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.
MARRYING FOR LOVE 1950; A song from Irving Berlin's 'Call Me Madam'. In the film it was sung by Ethel Merman.
NOBODY'S SWEETHEART 1952: For all the jaunty tongue in the cheek criticism of a woman of dubious character in the 1920s there is an integral poignancy.
NEVER BEFORE 1951: BBC presenter Alan Dell played this once and it suits Bing perfectly. Originally from a Martin & Lewis film, Bing sang it twice on his Chesterfield show. A good forgotten song.
The MORNING SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN 1951: Alan Dell played this very lyrical song which also came from one of Bing's Chesterfield shows. Reputedly a favourite of the much missed Leslie Gaylor.
I LEFT MY HEART IN SAN FRANCISCO A video 'The Magic Of Bing' was shown on ITV. It was shown twice. In the first showing Bing sang this Tony Bennett classic. On the second showing it was cut out probably because of the cursed adverts. A fine rendition by Bing and a welcome change.
THE NEXT TIME IT HAPPENS 1955: This song is attributed to the master songsmiths Rodgers and Hammerstein and was written for their obscure 1955 show 'Pipe Dream'. It has a 'Second Time Around' theme and it really becomes so attractive that it is equal to the 'Second Time Around' classic. Reputed to be a favourite of Reg Bristo.

It is unlikely that any compiler would not be able to get hold of these titles for what would be a rare CD collection.

(Editor: An interesting list from Ken and as always these types of lists tend to provoke debate. For instance, I think that 'We'll Gather Lilacs' is one of Bing's worst ever performances but we all have different opinions. I really like 'The Next Time it Happens' though and I remember Reg Bristo sending a taped message to the Leeds meeting after he had broken his leg which started with this song.)

Les Brice, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1AT

A very belated thank you for the truly superb Summer issue of BING..... The only problem, a rather big one for me alas, is that with every issue and after 50 years of collecting and admiring Bing, I now find that I know practically nothing about the great man at all! Records and alternate takes that I, or none of the people I knew over the years, had any idea about till I receive each copy of John McNicholas's mind blowing Chronological series. Nor of the content of radio shows that I have really only found out about lately after the postman stumbled to my door bent double with Lionel Pairpoint's utterly fascinating book. I think that 'stunning' is the only word to describe it. And again how does Jim Reilly ever track these latest CDs down, when I spend hours peering through the CD book at Smiths record counter and find nothing? How lucky we are that the Crosby Post blossomed to this marvellous magazine that we (thanks to all of you wonderful people) read today.

Pete Cakanic 11 Teal Court, North Augusta, S.C 298441-3276, USA

At least three or four issues have passed and as I read each one of them my intent was to write to commend you on the quality presented in each of those past issues. The photo reproductions are always superb and editorial text very informative even to one who knows a little bit about Bing but as I read each issue I realize just how little bit I know.

The cover of BING, Summer, 2000 is a personification of the Old Groaner. It is the type of photo the honchos at the U. S Postal Service should have considered when a postage stamp was issued. We who know Bing did not consider him in black tie and tux his life-long image. The photo with a pencil stuck up in his hat, with his comforting pipe and what appears to be a radio script is pure Crosbyana.

And just recently I received Lionel Pairpoint's masterpiece, "And Here's Bing" which will serve as an adjunct to "A Diary of a Lifetime' and all of the other great directories published in England. I thank Wig Wiggins for his tremendous work in helping us, here, in the U. S. to receive these books without much effort on our part.

I'm sorry I've taken so long to tell you but I think your write-up on the meeting with Kathryn Crosby was very well done. You prodded her ever so gently but did extract good information and also chided her just a bit on her past reluctance to promote Bing more aggressively.

My letter to you is meant to compliment not only you, but also all of the contributors to a very fine Bing Crosby publication.

Stan White, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 6EA

Looking at some of the Brunswick 78s today, featuring Bing and other American Decca artistes reminded me that I once read that some people in America think that the cheap selling price of American Decca 78s, helped Bing to achieve the huge sales that he did! I wonder about the above, because Bing did sell well in the UK and Ireland, and those Brunswick 78s were in the top price range for popular music 78s, almost double the price of the English Decca 78s. Prices varied according to Tax, but from the mid 1940s onwards, 5/- and upwards was not unusual for the Brunswick records, and a selling price of 5/4 lingered for quite a long time. Bing was very much in demand and that is what had to be paid to buy his records. English Decca owned the rights to use the Brunswick label, going back to the original American Brunswick label. Jack Kapp worked for American Brunswick. and eventually did a deal with Edward Lewis (later Sir Edward), who had founded English Decca, which is how American Decca came to be launched in 1934.

I am writing this on the last day of September, and it is sad to learn via Paul Barnes "Gold For Grown-ups" radio programme, that the great jazz and Big Band drummer, Nick Fatool has died within the past few days. Nick was a long standing friend of Bing and worked with him on many radio programmes with John Scott Trotter and recorded with Bing with Trotter, Victor Young, Jack Pleis and probably other studio bands. Nick had worked with Bob Crosby's Band and with Matty Matlock, Jess Stacy etc., and was on all of the Buddy Cole recordings with Bing both Big Band and the Trio/Quartet, the latter on records and radio. Nick Fatool was one of the last well known musicians who worked with Bing who made it through to 2000. Which brings me to a question. It is hardly likely that Andy Secrest who was a Trumpet player for Trotter and earlier on cornet for Whiteman is still alive, but I have never seen a report of his death. Does anyone know the answer? Andy went into real estate in his later years, was successful and founded the Los Angeles firm of Secrest and Fish.

John Bignell, 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2QB

My journey to Leeds to make my first ever appearance at the Annual Dinner / Meeting of the ICC turned out to be memorable. As well as having the pleasure of renewing old acquaintances (Michael Crampton, Bert Bishop and yourself), I was delighted to meet Arnold Pope, George O'Reilly and of course our star guest, Alan Fisher.

What a fine speaker Alan turned out to be and what an inspired choice as 'guest of honour', I was particularly impressed by the way Alan managed to field all the questions fired at him without hesitation. He was quite unflappable. Of course, he was in a privileged position of knowing the 'real' inside story of the second Crosby family as well as Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Alan managed to divulge much information hitherto unknown to me and yet achieved this without resorting to 'gossip' or 'tittle tattle'.

Alan's relationship with Bing (it was always 'sir' or 'Mr. Crosby' and his great help in bringing up the family came over clearly. His regard and admiration for Kathryn was obvious and sincere. Prince Charles also received much generous praise from Alan which made a pleasant change from much that we read in the press. Alan was in a unique position to comment on the people he worked for and he did not betray any trust.

Jim Reilly produced a superb video with fine excerpts from two of my favourite Crosby films 'Rhythm on the Range' and 'Emperor Waltz'. The meal was superb and Arnold Pope's quiz great fun. The only thing we ran out of was TIME.

"....And Here's Bing!"

We have been deluged with complimentary letters about the Radio Directories compiled by Lionel Pairpoint and unfortunately we cannot print all of these. However, we have however asked Stan White to give us his views and here they are.

One of my late Summer pleasures has been delving into Lionel's book and I just marvel at his stamina in sticking with this massive research project across the years. Words cannot do justice to the excellent work that has gone in to this publication by Lionel, by the printer and no doubt by the proof readers.

The Radio Directories list all known broadcasts featuring Bing from 1929 to 1977. Wisely, the book does not attempt to include the many radio programmes from across the world which were made up simply by playing Bing's commercial gramophone records, such as the well remembered and long running BBC series of 15 minute programmes called "Bing Sings'.' After the Author's Notes and a Prelude by Malcolm Macfarlane, the whole thing kicks off with Bing working as part of the Paul Whiteman organisation in the 1929 - 1930: "Old Gold presents Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra". After leaving Whiteman, Bing, Al Rinker and Harry Barris continued working together, and Lionel has covered the time in 1930 and 1931 when Bing, solo and with The Rhythm Boys, broadcast with Gus Arnheim from The Cocoanut Grove in the Ambassador Hotel in L.A. and other broadcasts in that period, for which full details are not known.

The regular radio series covered are:
Bing Crosby - Cremo Singer. 1931-1932.
Chesterfield Cigarettes presents Music That Satisfies. 1933
The maker's of Woodbury Facial Soap present Bing Crosby. 1933-1935.
The Kraft Music Hall. 1935 - 1946.
Armed Forces Radio Service. 1942-1977.
(including Command Performance, Mail Call and G.I. Journal)
Philco Radio Time. 1946-1949.
The Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield. 1949-1952.
The Bing Crosby Show for General Electric 1952-1954.
The Final Radio Years with Buddy Cole. 1954-1962.

Lionel includes wonderful detail within the very thorough Directory and Indices for each series. He even goes as far as comparing the various performances of the

same song with details of what is different, and of how radio performances differ from the commercial versions on gramophone records. Each series of programmes have at least two indexes - and up to four. All of Bing's performances are listed on their own. The guests in each programme have their songs or other musical items listed and so on and on because the information and detail is never ending.

From the start of the Philco series in 1946 through to the final General Electric Show in 1954 recordings/transcriptions of each programme exists, so that over the years of compiling this extraordinary book, Lionel has listened to them all. He has also listened to a great many recordings from the Kraft series. This includes the songs from the tapes made by Eddie Rice from the acetate recordings which John Scott Trotter kept for his own personal reference purposes, some of which he kept under his floorboards, much to the amusement of Buddy Cole. When the transcribed programmes came along, John Scott stored a copy of most of them in his garage. All of which has helped Lionel in his research. What a pity that it was not possible to include the general personnel of the John Scott Trotter Band from time to time. John did have a basic backbone of musicians who were with him for years, such as cornetist Andy Secrest, others came and went, (and came back again), so perhaps such a listing is almost impossible.

After delving into this wonderful book thoroughly, there is little doubt that Lionel considers the long running Kraft series to be his choice for the best radio years. This is a subject that will vary from person to person, and although the number of guests were cut back for the final series for General Electric, it has to be said that they were mostly top notch - Rosemary Clooney; Peggy Lee; Frank Sinatra, plus a feature in most programmes for the John Scott Trotter Orchestra, sometimes with solo appearances by Red Nichols, and Joe Venuti.

The book is very clearly printed with lots of photographs which fit the various periods covered. The outer covers are of card with a strong blue background with suitable lettering and backgrounds in gold.

I can't recommend this Radio Directories book to you, simply because as I write this, i understand that it has nearly sold-out, and being a limited edition it will not go to a re-print. Details of some radio programmes are not listed, in particular for the Woodbury Soap series. This is because it has proved impossible to date to locate the information. Certainly Lionel has been able to publish many more details than have ever before been possible. He sort of suggests that at sometime in the future, someone else might be able to complete the details but I have the feeling that Lionel has probably listed as much about all of Bing's radio programmes as we are ever likely to see. This book will therefore turn out to be the source for Bing's radio information for all time.

Lionel's book is also valuable in order to add to the often brief notes (if any) which are included on the increasing number of CDs of Bing's radio work. Lionel has listed some of the CDs, in fact probably all to the time of going to press. Many people think that Bing was often at his best on radio because John Scott Trotter and Bing were free to arrange the songs as they wished, which was not always the case in the Decca studios. Jack Kapp, in particular, had his own ideas, and often the Orchestra was cut down in personnel numbers to keep the costs down. This is why the commercial recordings and those which we hear from radio are often so different.

Newspaper coverage for many of the programmes is included and it does give a contemporary view of the programmes which is a bonus to the actual programme listings. Such coverage was on the wane by the 1950s although "Variety" continued to report on the programmes from time to time. Well done Lionel, I know that this has taken you many years to compile. It is a wonderful piece of work which will be of untold value for as long as Bing is remembered, plus in itself being a really important document covering a huge slice of the history of radio entertainment. A valuable and worthwhile publication.

Stan White

Another contribution for which we must find space came from Robert Achorn.

Lionel's book is a prodigious piece of work. The detail it provides is breathtaking. While Lionel calls himself "the compiler," this is far more than a compilation of readily available information. It reflects extraordinary research. For one thing, he has dug out the precise title of every known song Bing sang in his radio years. That sounds elementary, but Lionel has had to correct hundreds of inaccurate title references. He clearly spent thousands of hours listening to available tapes of many of the shows, searching out and identifying every nuance of different versions of the same material.

This mass of detail tells Bing's radio story brilliantly. When you consider that radio was probably less than one-third of Bing's business activity during his peak years, this is a record of an entertainer dedicated to hard work - whatever the casualness of his style.

Lionel says he has collected every scrap of reliable information, and I believe it. But he indicates he is also open to more. So a couple of words about one of the great Crosby moments. It came when he did his broadcast from his alma mater, Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. That was presumably the Kraft Music Hall of 21 October, 1937. Apparently, current records don't verify it, but Bing and his singing guest, Connie Boswell, threw open the last quarter of the live broadcast to shouted song requests from the Gonzaga audience (perhaps a little like the later camp shows and the Vera Lynn show.) Those events can be manipulated (the singer hears what he wants to hear, there are stooges in the audience, etc..) but this sounded unprogrammed. The musicians knew all the melodies (mostly from the Crosby repertoire.) Connie knew most of them. Bing knew the tunes; he was a little weak on the words. But, in his facile way, he made up his own lyrics as he went along, and the segment was a triumph. It was vivid, funny spontaneous radio - and great popular singing as well. If anybody has a tape of that request session, it would be well worth a hearing as a prime example of the free-wheeling Crosby style.

Some other observations stimulated by Lionel's book. 1. KMH (23.4.36) Fred Keating, supporting actor in "Doctor Rhythm," was indeed a magician. He toured with his magic act in the 1920s, and was on the final Palace

Theatre all-variety bill on Broadway in 1932. The vanishing canary was his signature trick. When vaudeville died, he got a job as Tallulah Bankhead's leading man in "Forsaking All Others," then went on to a modest Hollywood career. He was a strong candidate for the world's worst actor award.

2. KMH (4.12.41) Carole Landis is billed as Carol. I have some memory that she added the "e" as her movie roles grew.

3. KMH (3.12.42) Bing's guest, Marcia Maguire, is presumably the lively youngster who made a big impact as Marcy Maguire the next year in Sinatra's first major film, "Higher and Higher."

4. KMH (1.7.43) Bing's four-time guest, "Falstaff Openshaw," was the radio actor, Alan Reed. He played a pompous poet who read turgid verse with a humor kicker at the end. The routine was first developed on the Fred Allen radio show.

5. Philco (11.6.47) Bing closed the show with a solo version of "Something to Remember You By." That's probably the time he identified it as one of his five all-time favorite songs,

6. Chesterfield (8.3.50) Bing brought together on the air the two Garys: Crosby and Cooper. All those years ago, Bing said he named his son for Cooper (or maybe that was Paramount's idea, since they both were top stars there.)

7. Chesterfield (10.10.51) The unidentified Bill Thompson, the W.C. Fields imitator, was a regular announcer and performer on another popular comedy show - probably Fibber McGee and Molly.

8. Philco (20.4.49) One time rival Rudy Vallee, long past his star - crooner years, was Bing's guest. The script depicted "young Bing" trying to break into show business at the beginning of the 1930s by enlisting the aid of the hyper-popular Vallee. In one of Bing's phrases, that sketch was kidding on the square. For Lionel's book demonstrates that young Bing did indeed take a number of cues from the successful Rudy. Vallee's early theme song was "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover." Bing sang it on radio. He sang two songs Vallee had introduced on Broadway and plugged on radio "Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries" and "This Is the Missus." Bing quickly took up "As Time Goes By" which Vallee had built into a popular hit a dozen years before Dooley Wilson revived it successfully in "Casablanca." Crosby covered other Vallee specialties, including "Deep Night" and "Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep."

But curiously he didn't take up two other Vallee hits until many years later. One was Irving Berlin's "Say It Isn't So," which Vallee dug out of the trunk and made a major hit, helping to revive Berlin's career at a dark time. The other was the Cole Porter classic, "Just One of Those Things," which Vallee introduced to the radio audience. Bing did give a whirl in the '30s to "Sweet Music," the title song for one of the Vallee films. Then, of course, there was "The Whiffenpoof Song," which Vallee, a Yale man, made famous in the early years and Bing turned into a new hit many years later.

It's evident that in those early days, Bing (or his radio producers) were well aware of Vallee's musical influence and drew upon it. By the time of their joint appearance in 1949, Bing was the star of stars and Vallee was playing secondary comedy roles in films. But at least they got a broadcast out of those beginning years.

9. One of the most astonishing aspects of so comprehensive a book as Lionel's is its freedom from typographic errors. On KMH (12.10.39), the author of the Perry Mason mysteries was Erle Stanley Gardner, not Gardener (as the original show credits listed him.) On Page 327, the composer of "You Go to My Head" was J. Fred Coots, not Coot. And the tiniest of all: Philco (29.10.47) The identifying letter "f" is missing from the reference to the commercial recording of "The Whiffenpoof Song." (Don't print another edition just for that!)

The Pairpoint book is rich with many possibilities that go far beyond those listed above. It's a treasure chest and a treasure.

Robert C. Achorn

And finally from Derek Perkins.

The Radio Directories Book is a credit to all those associated with its production, from the initial idea and many years of subsequent research by Lionel, right up to the design, layout and printing of the finished product. It is a fitting tribute to Bing's long career in radio.

Today's generation, with instant access to television and satellite channels do not understand or realise that radio was the premier source of news and entertainment in the homes of millions of people around the world - the television of its day, and Bing's dominance of that medium was supreme, and continued for so many years. The sheer size of the book at 363 A4 pages is testimony to this legacy.

There is a definite *Bing look and feel* about this book which I like. What a pity it must be a limited edition, because I believe this fine tome would sell in major book and record stores, and present Bing and the I.C.C. to a wider audience in this millennium year and beyond. Again many congratulations to all concerned.

Derek Perkins

LIONEL'S LINES

"TRUST ME, I'M AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT"

I've decided to put my 'Fire The Editor Campaign' on hold for a short period on the bases of, who else would want the job and that anyone who is prepared to tolerate a guest such as I under his roof for a couple of days, deserves all the breaks he can get. Indeed, I am about to snaffle one of his favourite themes, 'What I Did On My Holidays'.

As a small boy, playing 'Cattle Operatives and Native Americans', I dreamed of re-enacting my childish scenarios on the broad plains and dusty trails of the original locales (with incidental music by Dimitri Tiomkin). And if you have read any of my previous writings, you may recall that some few years after this, during World War II, I was actively petitioning to be evacuated to Los Angeles. This plea proved instrumental in inspiring the first glimmerings of a suicide pact in Father's mind, when he said, "No! If the worst happens, we shall all go together!" (The second attempt involved moving house, half a mile closer to a munition factory and a main railway line).

Fuelled by five or six Hollywood movies per week, the ambition to cross the broad Atlantic persisted through adolescence until I joined HM Forces where I successfully evaded overseas drafts to Palestine, Egypt and points east, desperately holding out for the jewel in the crown - RAF Delegation, Washington. Sadly, they didn't require a corporal who knew all the words to 'Ballad For Americans' and also had a highly acclaimed impersonation of S.Z. 'Cuddles' Sakall up his sleeve. Inexorably, the years rolled by and a young man's flights of fancy faded in the light of more pressing responsibilities until I felt that I would probably feel happier, surveying the whole scene from the safety of a flying saucer.

Well, last summer, I finally made it. The full story is far too involved to set out here but my arrival provoked the attendance of representatives from the local Sheriff's office, the State Police, the Fire Department, sundry paramedics and a television crew. In addition, the British Consulate, the Federal Aviation Administration and a local delicatessen fluttered, for a while, on the sidelines. The US Immigration Service was late. And so, for several hours, I was able to slyly wander the streets of an American city, without official authorisation but with more than enough time to hold up a liquor store or maybe, open an Olde English Tea Shoppe, had I been that way inclined. Needless to say, I refrained from mentioning these excursions to the Immigration Officers as they had brought along the statutory notice that stated 'jokes about guns' (and probably buns) 'would be taken very seriously'.

I read somewhere that only two per cent of the total landmass of the United States is actually inhabited. This statistic becomes less surprising when one considers the vast amount of space which might be deemed to be, uninhabitable, including the deserts, the swamps, the mountain ranges, the salt flats and lakes capable of submerging the whole of Wales (Sorry, Dai and Gwyneth!), together with the freeways, the shopping malls and some of the motels.

Among things that I missed were the Manhattan skyline, the Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River and the Painted Desert. I never saw a town that had one of those signs that say 'Pop.' And 'Elev.' I never found a drug store with a genuine marble topped soda fountain or met a barman who said, "What'll it be, stranger"? I never got into a car whereupon a voice in the back seat muttered, "Don't turn around - Just drive". I couldn't find 'Carvel' in the gazetteers - I did so want to have an overdue word with Judge Hardy to establish if he had ever tried putting a brake on Andy's proclivity for working 'swell' into every sentence.

I was never offered a 'blue plate special' but I had already been warned that the Americans are serial eaters (Anyone who thought those booths in the fast food outlets were designed for four people had better think again). I only managed to keep within the bounds of cholesterol feasibility by chanting, prior to every meal, "Hold the hash browns, hold the pancakes, hold the corn syrup, hold the muffins, hold the pan-fried chicken gravy". Believe it or not, it was ten days before I came across my first 'used car lot'. The facade said, 'Ol' Vinny Needs The Money'. I believe I may have caught a glimpse of 'Ol' Vinny', in straw Stetson and wrap around shades. He looked a bit like the road boss in 'Cool Hand Luke' and could easily have added, 'So, Stick 'Em Up' to his slogan.

It could be that I was lucky but I found coffee that I could drink and shop assistants and waitresses that were polite and seemed to care. I saw drivers adhering to the speed limits and I didn't have to wade knee-deep through a morass of polystyrene boxes, cardboard cartons, plastic beakers and paper bags in McDonald's car park. The most endearing memory of all will be from Disney World, when Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs appeared for their photo-call and I happened to be standing close to a large lady with a fractious child. The conversation went like this, "C'mon Honey, let's go get us a dwarf". "Which one, Mommy?".. "Well, I dunno - the short one I guess". Start worrying America, I intend to return.

I have been overwhelmed by an avalanche of correspondence in response to the appearance of 'And Here's Bing'. I cannot adequately respond to all of the telephone calls, postcards, letters and e-mails as, after some meaningful discussion, my wife and I have decided that I no longer need a private secretary. Consequently, I would ask all those concerned to accept this as my grateful acknowledgement for their generous comments. It would also be appropriate to mention the names of Michael Crampton, Malcolm Macfarlane, Michael O'Toole and Jim Reilly who were entirely responsible for the publication and distribution of the book.

Lionel is presented with a bound copy of his book by Michael Crampton at the Leeds meeting.

Some of you have been able to point out some necessary additions and amendments and without making excuses, I thought that this might be an opportune moment to look at a few of the hazards that may lie in wait for the unsuspecting collator of the minutiae from a performer's career. Even in the most mundane occupation it would be impossible to remember clearly, all of the 'i's' that have been dotted or 't's' crossed. Add to this, the events witnessed, the places visited, the personalities encountered or perhaps, thousands of songs and memories can become clouded.

Bing was no exception. On its revival in 1947, when introducing the song, he claimed that he had recorded 'Guilty' but alas, this standard does not appear in the discographies. Perhaps, he was recalling the occasion when, at the height of the song's original popularity in 1931, he gave it a whirl as 'The Cremo Singer'. Miraculously, a portion of this rendition survives but the fidelity is such that some imagination must be used to envision the true glory of a complete version. I'd like to think that, maybe, he did record it and just maybe, a copy has gathered dust on a forgotten shelf, for seventy years, waiting to be discovered.

In October 1950, on the Chesterfield series, he refers to 'Harbour Lights' as, "...a tune I recorded twice. Once about twenty years ago and again, just last month'. The song was not written until 1937. Allowing for some unconscious exaggeration in time scale and that almost a third of his total recorded output in 1937 consisted of tunes of an 'Hawaiian' nature, is he falsely supposing, "It must have been in there, somewhere".

I spent a great deal of time agonising over the piece of music that supplanted 'Where The Blue of Night' on his last season for General Electric without ever establishing its title. Recently, I re-read 'The Fabulous Life Of Bing Crosby' by George Carpozi Jr. published in 1977 and found a quote attributed to Bing that I had previously overlooked, "I began thinking about it when I was up on the ranch in Nevada during the summer. I was getting pretty tired of 'Where The Blue Of The Night' and decided it was time I had a new theme for my radio show. The new number is an unnamed catchy melody being played on the piano one day at Paramount by Al Newman. I asked him what it was. He said it was just a little thing he was toying around with. I told him to toy around a little more because I was looking for a new theme song. Newman did just that and sent me the song. I liked it and we decided to use it on the show". Does the casual diminutive, 'Al', refer to Alfred Newman, who might have kept B & Q's head above water, supplying shelves to accommodate his Oscars? Surely, it would have been most unlikely to find one of the maestro's from Twentieth Century Fox tickling the ivories at Paramount and just as doubtful is Albert Newman who supplied a few pot-boilers for Republic Pictures. Was it ever a 'song' as opposed to a 'tune'? The melody is hardly 'catchy' being more 'March Militaire' than 'Mairzy Doats'. Was 'Al Newman' a memory hang-up by Bing who, on its initial broadcast, clearly credits the composition to Victor Young? Or, is it pertinent to mention that from the same book, "Bing signalled to Glenn Miller's pianist, Jack Russian" and that Alan Fisher is referred to as "Alan Butler"?

Dorothy Lamour helps Bing at the box office.

Dorothy Lamour's autobiography (as told to Dick Mcinnes), 'My Side Of The Road', reveals the following, "...there was a telegram from Paramount head, Y. Frank Freeman, asking me to call him immediately. 'Would you do me a big favour?' he asked, 'Bing Crosby is slipping at the box office and since you're in the top ten this year, I'd like you to do a film with Bing as soon as you get back'. Paramount had signed a huge contract with Bing and wanted my help to get him back where he belonged. So, I agreed to 'Dixie' but first I wanted three days vacation."

Again, the book was published after Bing's death. Who takes the credit for this one? Was it Dottie or production chief Freeman? Maybe Mr. McInnes misread his shorthand. Had no one observed that Bing was, in fact, busily climbing the box office ladder, rising to fourth in 1943, prior to five consecutive years in the top spot?

'First Lady Of Song' by Geoffrey Mark Fidelman, according to the author, is an unauthorised biography of Ella Fitzgerald and has, obviously, been painstakingly researched. Together with Ella's recording career, details of her radio and television appearances are meticulously chronicled. Nevertheless, the Crosby aficionado will find inaccuracies and omissions at which to nibble. With the obvious intent to scrupulously catalogue every song from every medium by the 'First Lady', the duets with Bing of 'Basin Street Blues' and 'Silver Bells' are neglected. On 29th November 1950, another duet, 'Memphis Blues' is shown as 'Basin Street Blues', 'featuring Red Nichols on trumpet', as opposed to the Firehouse Five Plus Two. The entry for the 18th December 1952 declares, "There was no duet with Bing, only a medley", ignoring the joint rendition of 'Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer.

The autobiography, 'Miss Peggy Lee' (1989), offers the following, "By now, I was singing with Bing Crosby on the Kraft Music Hall and Jimmy Durante on his Rexall programme and I had the pleasure of going to the NBC and CBS studios and working with them..I became a regular". Although she appeared with reasonable frequency on Philco (ABC), Chesterfield (CBS) and General Electric (CBS), it has been conclusively established that Miss Lee appeared with Bing on just one of the Kraft (NBC) programmes - the penultimate show in May 1946.

Regardless of this, many fairly recent publications seem to support her contention:

'The Encyclopaedia Of Old Time Radio' by John Dunning (1998) - The entry for 'The Kraft Music Hall' lists the "cast" as "Connie Boswell, Peggy Lee, The Music Maids & Hal, The Merry Macs (!), Jerry Lester and George Murphy".

'Raised On Radio' by Gerald Nachman (1998) - "Crosby made it (Kraft Music Hall) his home base for eleven years, starting in 1935 and rode it to the top with co-hosts, Connee Boswell, Peggy Lee, Ginny Simms and Mary Martin".

'Discovering Great Singers Of Classic Pop' by Roy Hemming & David Hajdu (1991) - "Crosby took over the whole programme and remained with Kraft until 1946. Bing didn't hog the shows all to himself, either. He loved sharing the spotlight with other singers and among his regular guests were, Connee Boswell, Louis Armstrong, Judy Garland, Mary Martin and Peggy Lee".

'The Encyclopaedia Of American Radio' by Ron Lackmann (1996) - The entry for 'The Kraft Music Hall' offers some quite astonishing lists when it states, "In 1936, the show's new star, Bing Crosby moved the programme to Hollywood. Comedian Lou Holtz became very popular with its listening public, as did comedian singer Eddie Foy and singers Jack Fulton, Nelson Eddy, Dorothy Kirsten and Roy Bargy (!). Among Crosby's other frequent guests were actress/singer Mary Martin, singer Connee Boswell, comedian/pianist Victor Borge, singer Peggy Lee, The Andrews Sisters, Dorothy Lamour, Judy Garland and Bob Hope". This last volume is headlined, 'Updated Edition' but still shows Bing's year of birth as "1901". (Even the over-criticised, 'The Hollow Man', published fifteen years earlier and with assistance from Ken Twiss, got this right!) The same book also declares, "Among Crosby's song hits are, 'White Christmas', 'Where The Blue of The Night', 'High Hopes' (!) and 'Swinging On A Star'".

So, Peggy Lee's involvement with the show is, already well on the way, to becoming something of an 'urban myth'. This is probably due to a blurring of the boundaries between 'The Kraft Music Hall' and Bing's later radio series but will posterity be able to recognise these ambiguities? We are now more than fifty years from the events. I do not envy future researchers.

Season's greetings to all (That'll save a few Christmas cards!). Let's meet again in the real new Millennium.

Lionel Pairpoint

LEEDS - 2000

Our annual gathering at Leeds is always a special occasion but this year it had an extra-special significance because it not only celebrated the 50th. anniversary of the club but it was also the 35th. meeting at Leeds. As if this wasn't enough, we were honoured by the presence of Alan Fisher, who spent 15 years as butler to the Crosby household.

It is strange, but, regardless of the weather forecast, as we arrive at Leeds, it is invariably a pleasant sunny day and this year was no exception. As always, members started arriving around 1:30 p.m. for the formal start at 3:00 p.m. This year there were not so many stalls in evidence but regulars such as Barry Whittingham, Stan Woodford and Ron Bosley supplemented by Michael Winspear and Lionel Pairpoint were offering interesting items for sale.

At around 3:00 p.m., George O'Reilly arrived bringing Alan Fisher with him and Alan was quickly installed on the front desk with Michael Crampton and Jim Reilly. Michael gave us his usual warm welcome to us all and welcomed new attendees Gillian Marsh, John Stenning, John and Jean Bignell, and Dave Newbold. He gave us the news that Kathryn Crosby had consented to be Honorary President of the club and he read out a letter from Kathryn which was circulated and is reproduced earlier in the magazine. Greetings from Wig and Laura Wiggins, from David Currington, Etty Gits, Renato Failace (Brazil) and Ron Field (Australia) were passed on to the audience together with a message from Art Allen, one of the original founders of the club. Art had recently discovered us again after an absence of 46 years thanks to a radio broadcast on Radio Lincolnshire featuring Stan White. Art had spoken to Michael by phone and mentioned that there were 750 members in 1950 and that each issue cost 10 pence including the postage and the envelope!

New displays were in evidence which had been prepared by Shaun Crampton and Michael had arranged for everyone attending to receive a special certificate commemorating their attendance. Again Shaun had prepared these on our behalf and had also made the menu and tickets for the event. The audience joined together to applaud Shaun for his hard work which was obviously much appreciated.

Michael then spent a few moments thanking the team for their magnificent work since we took over from Reg Bristro in 1989. In prime position were Wig and Laura Wiggins for their incredible achievements across the Atlantic and Michael showed us a special certificate which had been prepared thanking Wig and Laura for their hard work in growing our membership in the USA and Canada so dramatically. Michael thanked Ron and Vera Bosley for the incalculable debt we owe them for the priceless photos which adorn the magazine, Jim Reilly for his work in so many areas, Bert Bishop, Keith Parkinson, David Currington, Etty Gits and even your Editor who was portrayed as schoolteacher type of figure constantly berating others to deliver articles etc. whilst wearing his former Bank Manager's hat (it's all true!). Our secretary had left one member of the team until last. He had once received a letter from the 'President of the Issy Bon Society' aka Lionel Pairpoint and he called Lionel forward to present him with a 78 record featuring Issy Bon himself! There was a more serious reason for calling Lionel forward and that was to present him with a beautifully bound copy of his wonderful book '....And Here's Bing' which had been specially prepared by Michael O'Toole and suitably inscribed. Lionel was obviously touched by the gesture.

Michael Crampton, in reminding us that it was our 50th. anniversary, mentioned that two people present had been members from the start and both Michael O'Toole and Eric Jackson were given a special certificate to commemorate their half century association. Only one person other than Michael Crampton has attended all 35 of our Leeds gatherings and that man was Arnold Pope who also received a commemorative certificate.

Turning briefly to club matters, Michael said that the finances were on a sound footing and that subscriptions would be unchanged for 2001 but he reserved the right to review the position for 2002. Postage continues to be a major expense for us. The 2001 calendar had been

prepared by Michael O'Toole using many items loaned by Derek Perkins. The calendar contains photos of no less than 156 Crosby collectibles and Michael expressed our thanks to those responsible for putting it together. In closing, Michael reminded us of the many superb publications issued by the club over the years and announced that the meeting next year would be on Sunday, October 7.

Jim Reilly then introduced a video he had prepared for our entertainment and we watched the first portion of this which featured songs from 'Rhythm on the Range' plus a TV clip of our late lamented friend, Leslie Gaylor, in his Bing room at his home on the Isle of Wight. George O'Reilly followed and spent a few moments paying tribute to the ICC team and expressing pleasure that Kathryn had consented to become our Honorary President. He said that she just does not have the time to be very active but she will be glad to contribute if she can. George mentioned the 'Voice of The Century' programme put out by the South Bank Show last December and he told us that Alan Fisher had played an important part in making it happen and without further ado, Alan was introduced to us and took centre stage and please see the separate review of his two sessions with us which follows below.

Alan Fisher makes the first incision!

The meal seemed to be appreciated with one member telling me that it was the best we had ever had. Bing's songs were played throughout the meal, of course, and afterwards we had Arnold Pope's quiz which was won by Dave Newbold. Michael O'Toole had prepared an A3 size version of the 2001 calendar and this was raffled and produced £71 for club funds. Jim Reilly showed us more of his excellent video and also ran a short film quiz which was won by Gun Damo from Denmark.

Mavis Heason had baked a splendid cake for us which celebrated our anniversary and Alan Fisher made the initial cut for us with Mavis doing the intricate work of preparing slices for those present. Our grateful thanks are due to Mavis for her kind and thoughtful gesture in preparing the cake for us.

Michael raised the question of Les Gaylor's collection which the family would ideally like to sell as a whole. I suggested that perhaps an approach to Gonzaga might be considered although I doubted whether they had a budget for such items. Ken Crossland related how Al Sutton (former Editor of BINGANG) had passed on his collection to younger fans before he died and he commended this course of action to us all for the future.

But by now, the clock was beating us and 10:00 p.m. had come and gone. We made our farewells and a memorable day was over. Our grateful thanks are due to Michael Crampton for his hard work in organising another successful meeting which was attended by 70 people.

Malcolm Macfarlane

"No man is a hero to his valet"

These were the words that Alan Fisher used at the beginning of his question and answer session but first some background information.

Alan had first started work as a footman at Buckingham Palace and had gone on to work for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. He spent 15 years with the Crosbys and then worked for the Spencer family at Althorp before becoming butler to Prince Charles and Princess Diana immediately after their marriage. He worked for the Prince for three years.

By way of an introduction to his subject, Alan said at the outset that "No man is a hero to his valet" although he admitted that Bing was indeed a minor hero to him. He said that he would be very willing to take any questions we cared to throw at him and he opened by saying the he was never a fan of Bing's singing. However at the London Palladium, Alan used to hurry to the side of the stage to watch Bing's closing 32 song medley and Bing noticed this on one occasion and said "Don't tell me you are becoming a fan." Alan admitted that he might be doing so and Bing replied, "You've left it too late." Bing was dead a week later.

Back at the Crosby home, Bing's children would often ask Alan for his thoughts on Bing's shows knowing that they would get an independent view. The questions flowed easily and Alan told us that Bing lived a very conservative and simple life. The children were brought up that way too. Barry Whittingham asked whether Bing had ever

sacked him and Alan said "no" although in his role as butler, Alan said that "I spent his money like there was no tomorrow". He felt that Bing was "a wonderful human being" who did not become aggressive when annoyed but tended to become withdrawn and be terribly quiet.

Alan was asked how he had first got the job as Bing's butler and it seems that he was approached to be butler at Cranbourne Court when Bing and Bob Hope were staying there whilst making 'The Road to Hong Kong'. Unfortunately Alan could not agree terms with the intermediary arranging the appointment and another man was recruited. Alan wrote to Kathryn Crosby expressing his sorrow that he had not been able to join them and a few weeks later, Kathryn's secretary telephoned him and asked if he would be interested in working for the Crosbys in California. He was taken to meet Kathryn, then 6 months pregnant, and whilst he found her incredibly 'theatrical', "within 10 minutes I was in love with her." She offered him and his wife Norma a position with them and Alan asked if he could think it over. Kathryn asked that Alan should consider working for the Bob Hopes if he decided not to work with the Crosbys. As we know, Alan picked the Crosbys and he felt that he had made the right decision because on one occasion he was loaned to the Hopes for a big reception they were putting on for Frank Sinatra and Mia Farrow and he found it all a bit chaotic after the order and calm of the Crosby home. Alan explained that inevitably the butler works with the lady of the house and as long as she is happy, the man of the house will be happy too. He was clearly very comfortable working with Kathryn.

Alan talked briefly about his own childhood when as one of 5 children in a poor suburb of Manchester, he used to go to see the wonderful escapist films of the time (including many of Bing's) which did for the British people of the time what teams of psychiatrists do now. He said that Bing seldom sang in his own home although he would whistle a few bars in the morning as he came down to breakfast which Alan Fisher used as a signal to start serving the meal. The family usually ate together, especially in the evenings when dinner was served at 6:30 p.m. sharp and Bing would say grace. Bing was clearly very fussy about punctuality and an image was created by Alan of an almost Victorian father type regime. The staff were given the weekends off and the cook would prepare some meals in advance which Kathryn could serve. The routine in the house was that the children would wash the dishes at weekends and Alan was instructed not to touch any dishes over the weekend period.

Alan was asked about all the stories about Bing's allegedly harsh treatment of the children of his first marriage. He said that he found it very difficult to believe the stories as the most physical display of Bing's discipline he ever witnessed was Bing rolling up a newspaper and banging it on the table and saying "This has got to stop". The second family were certainly brought up strictly with high standards expected which Alan also helped to enforce. Alan said that he almost deserved to be an honorary Catholic because of the times he took the children to mass. But returning to the first family, he said that the boys frequently came to call although never all together. Alan found them all most charming young men, manly and gracious. He offered this opinion of them to Bing and Bing smiled and said, "Oh yes, they're charming but they've each broken every promise they've made to me." Alan was very annoyed about Gary Crosby's book. Alan said that the boys' mother, Dixie, was very well liked by everyone he met who knew her and she apparently had lovely manners.

Alan Fisher is presented with a copy of Lionel Pairpoint's book (photo by Ole and Gun)

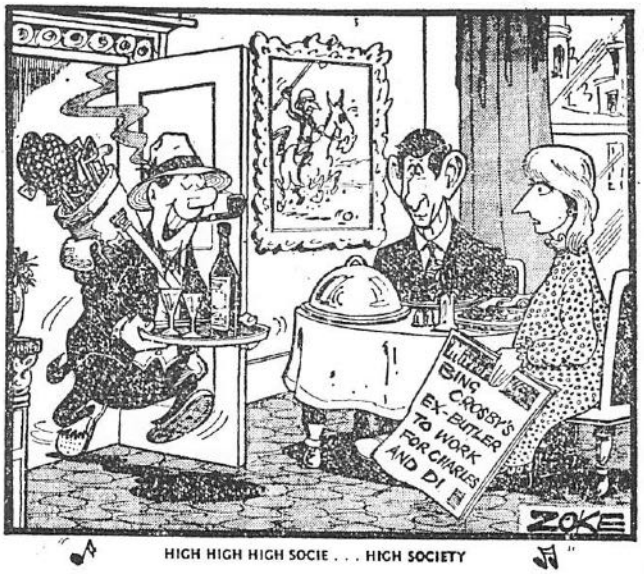
We were all surprised to learn that Bing did not play records in the house although he watched all of the major variety specials, including his own. Alan recalled a time when Nathaniel had made a disparaging remark about Ella Fitzgerald and Bing was quick to put him in his place saying that Ella was a wonderful lady and a superb singer. Pearl Bailey often stayed overnight at the Hillsborough house and the children looked upon her as 'Auntie Pearl'. Frank Sinatra, who Bing always called 'Francis Albert' called for lunch on occasion and Alan recalled Bing watching Frank at another time on a special on TV and expressing the view that Frank had perhaps burned the candle at both ends and should probably have retired at his peak.

Alan was asked about Bing's closest friends and we learned that apart from Phil Harris, his friends were mainly captains of industry and oil men. Bing clearly admired those who had succeeded in business rather more than entertainment figures.

The subject of Bing's hairpiece came up and Alan said that Bing only wore it for very formal occasions and never at home. Mary Frances, when a little girl, on seeing her Dad in his toupee said "Daddy, I hate you in your pretend hair" and Bing said "So do I". He had 4 hairpieces all of which fitted him incredibly well. Alan is amazed that Elton John has not found a better wigmaker! Alan also told an interesting story about Bing during his time at the London Palladium. Alan came into the Crosby's London flat and found Bing looking like thunder. Alan enquired about the reason for this and Bing said that he had lost his hairpiece. He looked Alan in the eye with his piercing blue eyes and said "If I don't find the hairpiece, I'm not going on stage tonight!" Eventually, the hairpiece was found in a box that the Spanish maid had put in the rubbish and Alan later heard Kathryn telling the maid off in Spanish. Alan was asked about Bing's political leanings and he said that Bing never aligned himself publicly with any political parties as he did not think it right that he should do so

because of the danger of influencing his fans that way. Alan talked about the night a day or so before Bing died, when at 11:30 p.m., Alan discovered the light on in the drawing room and he reached around the door and switched the light off. Alan was surprised when Bing spoke up because Bing was usually in bed by 9:30 p.m. with a good book. Bing was busily handwriting letters to various fans and again Alan wondered whether Bing had had a premonition about his imminent demise and was anxious to leave matters tidy.

In talking about Bing's clothes, he said that Bing dressed simply but that he would pay, say, $3000 for a jacket. He laughed as he recalled that Bing would often be seen in a cardigan with holes in the sleeve. Alan discussed how he came on ahead to find suitable accommodation for the Crosbys on the occasion of one of their visits to the UK and how the family trusted his judgement implicitly. Alan made the point that Kathryn was in many ways an unsung heroine because she was very supportive of Bing and probably accepted situations that other wives would not. Alan quoted an example of Bing deciding at the last moment not to go to a dinner party although Kathryn was all dressed and ready to go. Kathryn relied on Alan to remember the children's birthdays and buy the presents etc. but it was interesting to learn that Bing himself always went out on his own to buy presents for Kathryn. Alan described how Bing would go into supermarkets himself to buy items for his duck club and this invariably caused a hush to fall over the supermarket. I asked about Bing's recurring health problems with his kidney stones and Alan explained how they would fly bottles of special water down to the Mexican house which Bing would use for drinking and which was also used for cooking. Bing would never discuss his health or money matters in his home.



HIGH HIGH HIGH SOCIE . . . HIGH SOCIETY

We touched briefly on Alan's spell with Prince Charles and Princess Diana. I had recalled a cartoon in a newspaper at the time and Peter Howard kindly sent this to me for reproduction above. Alan spoke very complimentarily about the Prince saying that he was a very fine humanitarian. Princess Diana was very gracious and charming but sadly many of the stories being related by her former Personal Adviser in the press at present are true. Alan related how the Princess had not been very happy about Alan taking part in the TV show about Bing hosted by Barry Norman and had not wanted him to do it. Alan had made a contribution however without the knowledge of the Princess. Later it seems the Prince and Princess were dining with the Queen and the Queen rushed them all through the meal because she was anxious to watch the Barry Norman programme. One can imagine Diana's surprise when Alan appeared on it but she was complimentary to him about his spot on the show.

Alan gave us two separate sessions and answered our questions frankly and openly in an easy and often amusing style. He had very generously brought along several Bing items such as hats, a pipe and some letters and photos which he wanted to be spread amongst those present. A draw took place and several of us received some wonderful mementoes.

I rose to propose a vote of thanks to Alan for some wonderfully entertaining stories but before I could get to the time honoured words "Please join me in showing our appreciation in the usual way" the audience broke into spontaneous applause to thank a very nice man for a superb evening. We hope that Alan will be able to join us again next year.

Malcolm Macfarlane

ONCE IN A WHILE

The section of the magazine covering the obituaries of those connected with Bing.

Loretta Young - died in August at the age of 87. She starred in 88 films between 1927 and 1953 and picked up the Academy Award for best actress in 'The Farmer's Daughter' (1947). Her films included 'Caravan' and 'Shanghai' (both with Charles Boyer), 'Call of the Wild' (with Clark Gable), 'The Story of Alexander Graham Bell' (with Don Ameche) and 'Bedtime Story' (with Fredric March). She was a devout Roman Catholic and worked tirelessly for church charities and in that role she worked with Bing on several occasions. They appeared together in the film 'You Can Change the World' (made in 1951 for the Christopher Association) and on radio in 'Five Will Get You Ten' (March 7, 1945 - in aid of the Catholic Bishops' War Emergency and Relief Committee). Her last featured film was in 1953 with 'It Happens Every Thursday' with John Forsythe and then she went into television, starring in more than 300 episodes of 'The Loretta Young Show'.

Joan Marsh, who also passed away in August, was probably the last surviving actor to have been in an American film before the First World Wart. A child actress under the name of Dorothy Rosher, she eventually graduated to talkies but was rarely in more than a supporting role. Her best roles were in 'Rainbow Over Broadway' (1934), 'Many Happy Returns' (1934 - with Burns and Allen) and 'You're Telling Me' (1934 - with W. C. Fields). Her connection with Bing comes from 'Road to Zanzibar' (1941) when she was 'Dimples' and helped Bing to fire Bob Hope from the cannon.

Nick Fatool died in September at the age of 85. Nick was a jazz drummer who worked with John Scott Trotter and with Buddy Cole and it was in this role he backed Bing on many occasions. Born in Milbury, Mass., he hit the big time with Benny Goodman, appearing on many of the recordings made by Goodman's sextet. He went on to work for Artie Shaw, Bob Crosby and Harry James before joining the Trotter aggregation. In his later years, he often worked with Pete Fountain and other Dixieland bands.

Tommy Reilly was also lost to us in September. He was 81 and was considered the world's leading harmonica player. He had some 30 concert works written for him but he will probably be remembered in the UK for the signature tunes he played for 'The Navy Lark' and 'Dixon of Dock Green'. He worked on many film soundtracks too including 'Midnight Cowboy' (1969) and 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' (1965). Born in Ontario, Canada in 1919, he moved with his family to England in 1935. Accepted as a violinist by the Leipzig Conservatoire, he was arrested by the Gestapo and interred. He spent the war in various camps and it was there he perfected his technique on the harmonica. It was Tommy who provided the attractive accompaniment to Bing's reading of 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' in 1975.

Ann Doran, the veteran character actress died in September at the age of 89. She may be best remembered as James Dean's mother in 'Rebel Without a Cause'. Ann appeared in supporting roles in about 500 pictures including playing the character of 'Ruth' (one of the Waves) in Bing's film 'Here Come The Waves' (1944).

Peter Gennaro passed away in September. He was 80. Peter was a dancer who choreographed many TV variety programmes and some of Broadway's biggest shows. He won a Tony award for the musical 'Annie'. He and his Peter Gennaro Dancers were regulars on TV programmes such as 'The Perry Como Show', 'The Andy Williams Show' and 'The Judy Garland Show'. Peter appeared with Bing on 'Perry Como's Kraft Music Hall' on March 16, 1960 and also on 'The Bing Crosby Show' of February 15, 1964.

Carl Sigman, the songwriter was lost to us, also in September, at the age of 91. He wrote many songs which Bing sang including 'A Marshmallow World', 'Answer Me', 'Arriverderci, Roma', 'Ballerina', 'Careless Hands', 'Civilisation', 'Don't Ever Be Afraid to go Home', 'Ebb Tide', 'Enjoy Yourself' and 'It's All in the Game'. Other important songs credited to him were 'Pennsylvania 65000', 'What Now My Love' and 'Where Do I Begin' plus a theme song many of us will remember, 'Robin Hood' (riding through the glen).

Robert Allen, who composed many top songs, died in October aged 73. He wrote his biggest hits with lyricist Al Stillman and together they produced 'Chances Are', If Dreams Came True', 'Moments to Remember', 'Home for the Holidays' and 'It's Not For Me To Say', several of which were recorded by Bing. In 1963, Allen wrote the music for and produced 'Three Billion Millionaires,' a benefit album for the United Nations featuring Judy Garland, Danny Kaye, Sammy Davis Jr., Jack Benny and Bing, who sang 'Tower of Babel'.

BING AND BLACK PERFORMERS

Robert Achorn discusses this emotive subject.

One of the mild controversies attached to Bing Crosby was his relationship in the United States with black performers. He generally appeared to work warmly and comfortably with all performers, regardless of race, ethnic background or other meaningless distinctions. But at least some audience members wondered whether his three early 1940s film performances in the ancient style of blackface were really necessary. Some with even longer memories could bring to mind his blackface appearance in the 1932 Sennett two-reeler, "Dream House," which is unwatchable today. In 1938, Paramount used him in blackface for the "Small fry" number with Donald O'Connor in "Sing You Sinners."

Bing's experiences with blackface began long before the 1930s. Malcolm Macfarlane's extraordinary "Diary of a Lifetime" discloses that Bing appeared in blackface at the age of 11, in a benefit show for the Webster School. In the fall of 1920, at Gonzaga, Malcolm tells us Bing played blackface roles in at least two campus productions, a comedy and a minstrel show.

If overwhelmingly white audiences in the first half of the 20th century accepted blackface as no more than a genial, comfortable form of entertainment, it has been re-appraised and recognized generally now as demeaning and offensive. More radical critics call it an expression of white racial hatred and part of a conscious, widespread effort to hold down blacks.

In doing blackface on film, Crosby was far from alone. Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor blacked up often in their performances, on stage and later in movies. It was a standard, expected part of their acts. Fred Astaire, Will Rogers and Judy Garland did blackface bits, improbable as that may seem. Even some black performers applied burnt cork or black greasepaint. Current critics see in this the symbolism of coating faces and hands with dirt, hiding the real person. Yet it was a commonplace style - dating from 19th century minstrel days - in musicals in variety and in Broadway drama. It lasted at the Hollywood studios until about 1946. The moguls were finally persuaded that it was racially demeaning and potentially bad for the box office. Dan Dailey, at 20th Century-Fox, was one of the last white stars to paint his face black for a musical number in a film. Blackface made a last, embarrassed gasp in the first half of the retrospective 1949 "Jolson Sings Again."

In his 1996 book, "Blackface, White Noise," Prof. Michael Rogin of the University of California illuminates the horrors of blackface in the work of such performers as Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor, and in many nonmusical films. He also keeps coming back to Bing and Marjorie Reynolds - in blackface - performing Irving Berlin's "Abraham" in "Holiday Inn." He observes that the film used two segregated bands, one in whiteface, one in blackface. Bing is pictured in the book singing in blackface with the blackface band. "Mamie (Louise Beavers) and her pickaninny children join in for the chorus," Rogin drily adds.

Rogin also discusses Paramount's 1943 "Dixie," complete with a picture of a sad-faced Bing in black makeup. Perhaps it should be said that Prof. Rogin does

not seem particularly interested in excoriating individual performers. He is rather examining what he sees as Hollywood's employment of blackface to shape American cultural attitudes against blacks. It is an easy assumption for today's critics that all whites who appeared in blackface were signaling personal hostility toward, or disdain for, black performers. But racial history is more complicated than that. For Bing at least, easy assumptions are denied by the record. In an era when black performers found it difficult to get important work on radio, in films and later on television, Crosby opened doors.

Still, in the 1950s, the influential film critic of The New York Times, Bosley Crowther, reproached Bing for what Crowther saw as a patronizing attitude toward black performers in his films. In his eyes, Crosby treated them like plantation hands—a fancy term for slaves. But Crowther's complaint was not taken up by others. The general view seemed to be that Crosby treated black performers no differently from white performers. If he seemed a bit to oblivious to them, that may have reflected the familiar disdain of the superstar for all the performers around him, regardless of skin colour. I think Crowther was straining to make a point and attacking Bing unfairly, with evident ignorance of Crosby's history.

There has been recent race-sensitive criticism that joint performances by white and black performers were tolerated by white audiences only when the white was presented as superior to the black. The Bing Crosby-Louis Armstrong appearances have been cited as an example. Such criticism is uninformed. While in box-office terms Crosby was a far bigger star than Armstrong, the arrangements for their songs were regularly designed and performed to give the two stars equal prominence. This was far from an example of white domination.

Bing often called Armstrong, the great jazz player, his very good friend. But Armstrong noted, and with evident regret, that Bing never invited him to the Crosby home. Again, that has to be examined in light of the Crosby lifestyle and personality. Bob Hope, Bing's presumed buddy in films, radio, recordings, television and on the golf course, once said that he was seldom if ever invited to Crosby's home. Similar thoughts came from the Andrews Sisters and even John Scott Trotter. The record suggests that Bing compartmentalized his life. He was not much for socializing with show business acquaintances, even "very good friends," whatever their skin colour.

Crosby first became a fan of Armstrong in Chicago in the late '20s, and borrowed some singing-style touches from him. Bing helped bring Louis to national attention with a role in "Pennies from Heaven" in 1936, Louis' third movie but the first in which he made such an impact. In Hollywood's style of the time, his "Pennies" role had demeaning elements. But Armstrong's trumpet cut powerfully through the racism.

Lionel Pairpoint's detailed study of Crosby's radio years now reveals that on Aug. 13, 1936, when "Pennies from Heaven" was being filmed, Bing had Louis as a guest on the Kraft Music Hall. That radio appearance unquestionably brought Armstrong happily to the attention of many Americans who were not familiar with his work. Armstrong filmed a number for Bing's "Doctor Rhythm" in 1937. Again, while Louis was in Hollywood for the movie, Bing drafted him to appear on the very popular KMH. It is noteworthy that both "Pennies from Heaven" and "Doctor Rhythm" were independent productions, over which Bing had some control. The later film was released by Paramount but its production was not dominated by that studio (which cut Armstrong's number.)

Bing and Louis on the 'Doctor Rhythm' set.

It's difficult today to reconstruct the extent and character of racial feelings in the United States in the 1930s. But it was an era in which white performers and black performers almost never starred in the same scene or on the same broadcast. When they did, the black performer—Stepin Fetchit or Willic Best, as two examples—was expected to grovel. Only Clarence Muse and, to an extent, Paul Robeson, seemed able to insist on maintaining dignity in their appearances.

When the Capitol Theatre on Broadway sought to sign the blonde opera and film star, Grace Moore, for one of its variety weeks in 1935, she demanded that no black acts he on the bill. The Capitol management refused; she didn't appear.

Joint black and white performances were almost unknown—except those in which Bing Crosby was involved. Benny Goodman attracted international attention in the mid-30s when he integrated his trio and quintet. Bands until then were expected to be entirely white or entirely black. When the white band singer, Helen Forrest, cut an album with Lionel Hampton and his orchestra in 1940, there was frowning and tut-tutting.

The New York Times, ignoring Crosby's earlier singing performances, claimed recently that Gene Kelly "broke the color line" when he danced with the Nicholas Brothers in a 1948 film. Incredibly, as late as 1956, there was controversy when Petula Clark put her hand on Harry Belafonte's arm in a friendly gesture after they sang a duet

on television.

In view of such bigoted racial attitudes, it is instructive to look at Crosby's history. The Rhythm Boys (including Bing) cut a record with Duke Ellington in 1930. Two years later, Bing did a solo performance of "St. Louis Blues" with the Ellington orchestra. As Bing's radio shows began to rise to the top of the broadcast ratings, he employed the Mills Brothers and later the Charioteers as regulars in his cast. By the early 1940s, Bing on radio had brought to American audiences such performers as Paul Robeson, Ethel Waters, Duke Ellington and the great Marian Anderson. The King Cole Trio appeared as early as 1945. And no one should forget Bing's records with Louis Jordan and the Tympany Five.

To be sure, Bing didn't usually book the performers himself, but he had enough clout to rule out anyone with whom he didn't want to work. On television, Bing performed closely and effectively with such stars as Pearl Bailey, Ella Fitzgerald, Melba Moore and Flip Wilson. No one who heard on "Hollywood Palace" Bing's call to Americans to pray for Nat King Cole (dying of lung cancer) would doubt its sincerity.

"Wig" Wiggins has noted Gary Giddins' story that a sponsor tried to keep Louis Armstrong off Bing's 1957 Edsel show, because of Armstrong's (untypical) attack on racism in the Little Rock school integration crisis. Giddins reported Bing's reaction: "No Armstrong, no Crosby." The show went on. Armstrong was prominently featured.

Given his career record, the suggestion that Bing showed bias toward black performers is fraudulent. Was he a crusader for civil rights? Not in any proclaimed way. Might he have done more? No doubt. Most white Americans could have. But, if anything, Bing was well ahead of most of the rest of American show business in recognizing, promoting and participating in great entertainment with black performers.

Robert Achorn

UNDERCURRENTS

David Currington brings us some fascinating news from 'down under'.

The tale of what's happening in Australia is the tale of what could have been. About 3 years back Jim Reilly, through his contacts, had found out that Universal Music here would possibly be receptive to some input for proposed Bing CD's. The short story is that, with plenty of assistance, Australian Universal had clearance for and masters, photos, notes - even complete CD artwork and layout - to 5 original CD concepts. The sad story is that, after much delay and a move in office location, everything was lost!

With the assistance of local collectors, the tracks not readily available from the US parent were quickly replaced along with all Universal's relevant internal paperwork which I had the presence of mind to have had copied (although I could not and would not provide, replacements for my lost negatives, books and the like). Then came the great Polygram merger and there the story ends. It distresses me to review what might have been, but following are notes I had prepared at the time for inclusion in Jim Reilly's "Keeping Track".

SINGING PICTURES

A 50 track double disc featuring one song from each of Bing's movies made during his Paramount contract from 1932 to 1956, presented chronologically. I guess it could be described as a kind of truncated version of that marvellous 15 LP series, "Bing's Hollywood". This set provides the unique opportunity to listen to a year by year progression of our song stylist singing the songs that for most of us were our introduction to Bing - his movie songs. Not that the selections are necessarily the most well known from those films. (There's no "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral" or "White Christmas" here.) Instead, on the whole it is a selection of lesser-issued songs which should have appeal for the collectors whilst catering to the broader market.

I LOVE PARIS

Surely the collectors' most long awaited reissue is the 10" "Le Bing". Here it is, augmented by all the Decca tracks (apart from the "Holiday in Europe" LP) which have some known French connection - a total of 26 tracks. ("Bonne Nuit" even finds its way onto the disc, being included purely on its title!). For me, the Paris recording session of 16 May 1953 under the baton of Paul Durand Et Son Grande Orchestre is one of Bing's most outstanding. Further, the combination of voice, presentation, interpretation, arrangement and orchestration of "Tu Ne Peux Pas Te Figurer" is perfection. Maybe if the song title were pronounceable it would have "classic" status with more people than just me.

FOR THE FIRST TIME

When this concept was devised, none of the 25 tracks had been issued on CD. Some of them had only ever appeared on 78. The title does not now ring true, but it remains an outstanding collectors' issue with inclusion of such tracks as "Conchita, Marquita ... Lopez", "What Am I Gonna Do About You","Mighty Lak' a Rose" and so on.

JUST A LITTLE LOVIN'

A personal favourite of mine with a varied selection of less familiar songs on the most familiar "love" theme. All 25 tracks are from Bing's 50's output, a period which has been pretty well overlooked in major CD reissues. Undeservedly so, too, because Bing's voice and presentation style had been honed to perfection. Recording techniques had developed to such an extent that for perhaps the first time they do true justice to Bing's outstanding tonal qualities.

LET'S HARMONIZE

A different slant on the "Bing and Friends" concept. These 25 tracks date from 1944 to 1953 and present Bing in company with other vocalists. At times they are named singers, but mostly Bing is up front with a choral backing, vocal chorus, or the like. The songs were rare to LP and are even rarer to CD. Another real collection for the collector.

My visits to Universal gave me access to their old catalogue of Bing's song listings. It includes a page of 'unissued' tracks. After sorting out the errors and updates, 3 tracks stood out. (A fourth unissued track was later identified by a local collector.) These are:

Easy on the Eyes (Coslow) 82554 23 March 1952
Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh! (Olman Rose) L7251 9 June 1953
My Little Girl (unknown) L7253 9 June 1953
Too Old To Cut the Mustard (Bill Carlisle) W82776 24 April 1952.

I've not seen these tracks listed in any Bing discography, so it was indeed an exciting prospect that these tracks were to form the basis of a sixth CD to be entitled FROM THE VAULTS. That suggestion struck an almost immediate snag in that Universal in the US refused to grant Australia release rights, basically as it claimed that the US always did the initial release. (At this point let's remind ourselves that they are called "Universal Music".)

FROM THE VAULTS was proposed to contain 25 unissued masters such as "Back Home Again in Indiana" and "Open Up Your Heart" from 9 June 1953, "The Dixieland Band" and "Jamboree Jones" from 14 February 1950, "Baia" and "Siboney" from 28 January 1945, "All you Want to Do is Dance" from 2 July 1943, "Mighty Lak' a Rose" from 4 December 1945, and so on.

Maybe when the glue has dried on the Universal/Polygram amalgam someone with a bit more stamina than me might breathe new life into some of these concepts which I have seen wither and die in my arms.

David Currington

(Editor: David has certainly been busy and what a great pity that these releases have not yest come off. The news about the unknown takes is startling and I do hope that their existence can be verified and the takes released. I am not so sure about rejected takes where Bing's voice was lacklustre e.g. 'A Door Will Open' but I will watch developments with interest.)

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

Now that there are so many film channels showing hundreds of movies every month it was felt that a change in format for the inevitable percentage of Crosby pictures would be more appropriate than the previously escalating and increasingly pedantic lay out of what's been on and where. Hence, a quick resume of the titles, all of which have been screened on the satellite or digital channels in Britain during the last four months, and all of which have been broadcast several times over. The selection is encouraging and reasonably representative of Bing in his most popular years:

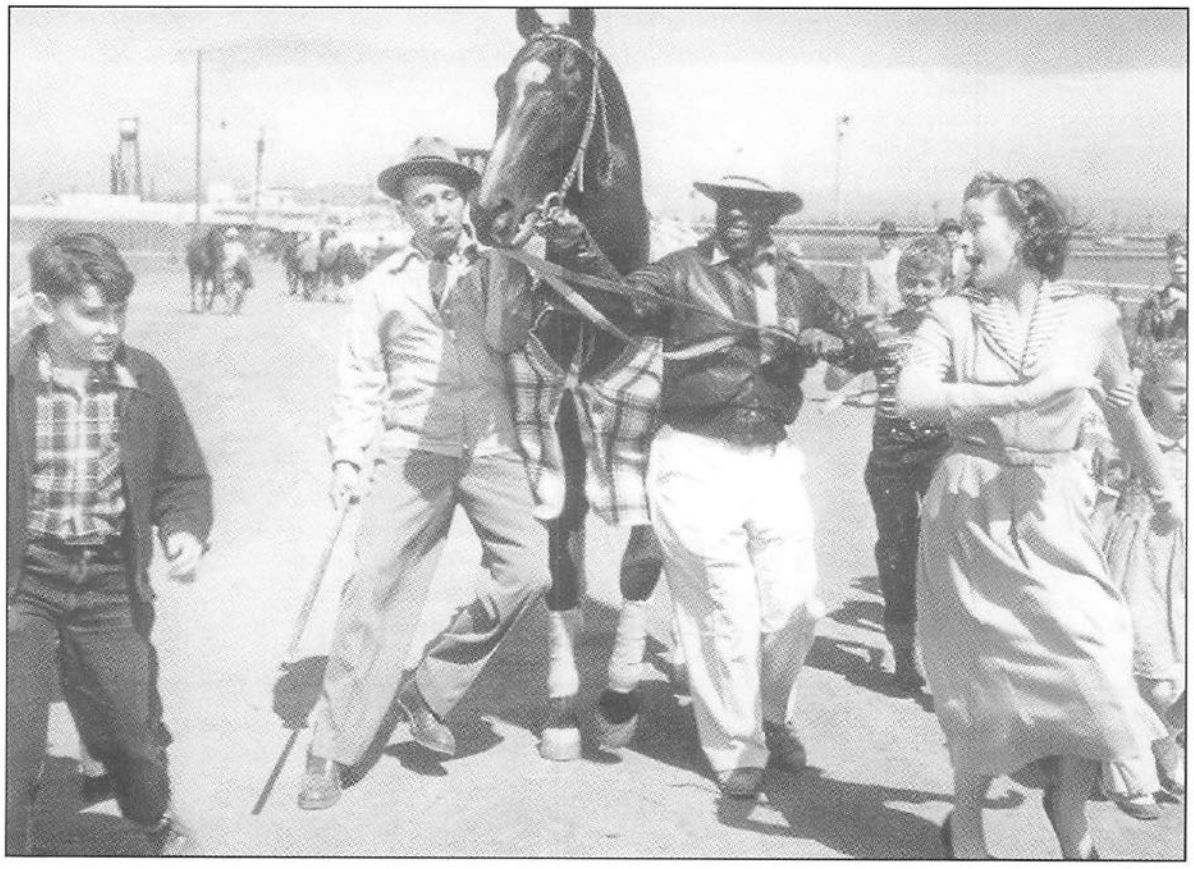
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - GOING HOLLYWOOD - GOING MY WAY - HIGH SOCIETY - RIDING HIGH - ROAD TO SINGAPORE - ROAD TO UTOPIA - ROAD TO ZANZIBAR - ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS - THE ADVENTURES OF ICHABOD AND MR TOAD - THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S - THE COUNTRY GIRL - HOLIDAY INN

The film RIDING HIGH might be considered as something of a hobby-horse for director Frank Capra for he had already had a winner with his 1934 version, then entitled BROADWAY BILL. Many of the original cast of character actors were in both, but by the casting of Bing in the lead role it was obvious that Capra fancied the idea of the combination of such a well known race horse owner - singer - movie star in a musical re-make. However, it was a bit of a departure from the usual Crosby film format as Bing loved his horse more than the girl and it was left to her to make all the running. Even Burke and Van Heusen were hardly called upon to come up with a real romantic ballad. "Sure Thing" being more racetrack jargon than love song lyrics. Typically Capra, the film is noisy, pacey and lighthearted with an ante-penultimate scene of unashamed sentimentality, but overall lacking in the charm of such as IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT or IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. Both "Sunshine Cake" and the rousing "The Horse Told Me" were recorded on set and this may well account for their extra appeal - the participants all seemed to be enjoying themselves and Bing is such a natural at that kind of near ad lib performance. This may be a good opportunity to enquire if any member knows the origin of Bing's occasionally quoted expression, also in this film, 'Olly olly oxen free!'. I have heard it said that Olly is a corruption of the French 'allez'. Any comments anyone?

One other title during August, which could be of significance to collectors of Crosby movies, is ANGELS IN THE OUTFIELD. This was billed by Turner Classic Movies (TCM) as being the 1951 version in which Bing makes an amusing guest appearance on a golf course. There is a 1994 re-make but unfortunately I missed the screening so can't be sure about this. However, as the Bing version is an MGM picture, and TCM only screen that studio's films (and Warner Brothers) the evidence would suggest that it was the original version. We must look out for repeat screenings on TCM - it's bound to come around again. There'll be more about the Ichabod cartoon double in the next issue as this was a late entry.

SCRAMBLED EGG

During the Battle of Britain 60th Anniversary celebrations, our very own Squadron Leader Skues, answering more usually to Skuesy, recalled an excerpt from *Music Of The Few*, a programme that he hosted in 1969. His chosen excerpt was a recollection of R.A.F. Tangmere by Wing Commander Claire Legge who was a corporal fighter controller at that time. After describing



A nice scene from 'Riding High'

the well documented bombing of that fighter base she went on to select "Deep Purple" as her remembered piece of music. Heroes and heroines all, whatever their status and role in those crucial sixteen weeks. Still in the midst of the upper echelons of the services, Keith played "What Can You Do With A General?" a track by Bing which he'd never heard before. This happens all the time. Presenters receive complimentary CDs, the contents of which are quite unknown to them. It reinforces the trend away from the old Crosby regulars opening up a whole new world of musical Crosbyana. Rarely heard is the solo version of "Road To Morocco" for example, and Skuesy has also been delving quite deeply into the wireless archives to resurrect some very enjoyable performances: "What A Difference A Day Made" and "Oh, How I Miss You Tonight" from KMH. Our very popular Squadron Leader, on ten to midnight five nights a week in the eastern regions of the BBC, has a stack of Bing 78s that he is gradually working his way through, on top of his excursions into air-shot material lifted from compact disc. Only "Around The World" would be considered to be one of the old favourites among the many that have been given a spin in the last four months.

National radio still remains a near desert for music from Mr. C, but a couple of oases still may be found out there in the barren, musical wastelands. I refer to Desmond Carrington and Russell Davies, both of whom slake the thirsts of weary listeners traversing the featureless sands of so-called popular music. Broadcasting from his home in Scotland, Desmond brings a touch of sanity to Sundays with Bing ever present each and every week. While the predominance excludes what many of us consider to be Bing's greatest years the mix is varied and always presented very affectionately. The earliest track heard was "Let's Call A Heart A Heart" and was a welcome return to the 'Thirties; while "The Woman On Your Arm" was around to represent and steady the senior citizen's late return to the recording studio. Later on Sundays, Russell Davies, that doyen of delvers into the slightly unusual, is around to dispense his own brand of tongue-in-cheek humour as with his comment on "Please" that Bing enters with a note that in later years he could only achieve by sitting down suddenly on a bag of golf balls. He liked the strange luminosity in Bing's voice that is apparent in "Dancing Under The Stars" but felt that "The Funny Old Hills" offers a rare chance to hear Bing singing in a dustbin! Russell is one of several presenters who has no time for "Sweet Leilani" believing it scandalous that it won an Oscar. Paul Barnes is happy to draw a veil over Bing's very first million seller expressing the opinion that 'the least said about it the better'. It has certainly caused a lot of controversy and Frank Wappat has had reason to complain about Harry Owens' composition, too, by virtue of a time waster who was convinced that it was Al Bowlly who sang the first few bars on Bing's recording.

THANKS

It seems remarkable that Bill Rennells had never heard of that recording until requested by a listener. Along with his Missus, who has a crush on Bing's voice, their *Harmony Night* still remains one of the most prolific regional programmes for Crosby recordings. They've been playing some lovely tracks: "Here Lies Love",

"Would You" (the Brown-Freed version), "Out Of Nowhere" and "I Still Love To Kiss You Goodnight" being some of the examples - and all chosen by listeners. Not always by Crosby stalwarts either. So it would seem that the Kent based region has a very knowledgeable population when it comes to Bing numbers.

TO HEAR HIM IS TO LOVE HIM

Well, that's Frank Wappat's opinion up there in Tyneside; an aural adaptation of the ballad from ROAD TO BALI which he featured on his Sunday programme. Always unstinting in his praise, Frank played, once again, the cassette that Bing had sent to him and his listeners many years ago. On the tape Bing requested the playing of "Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn", which would have been responded to at the time. But now, years later, Frank was happy to oblige again in honour of Bing's 97th. Birthday, saying, 'I don't think anyone brought as much happiness to as many people as Bing did over the years. He was a great star. One of the greatest ever.' Giving another resume of his career Frank noted Bing's religious devotion by playing "Oh Lord, I Am Not Worthy", a track that he felt sure very few, if any, listeners would have heard before. Subsequent programmes have featured that lovely track' "It Must Be True' from the 1939 catalogue of the John Scott Trotter Frying Pan Five group with vocal back up from the Music Maids. If you haven't played it in a while I do urge you to take another listen. The whole recording is pure pleasure and a supreme example of Bing's laid back effortless style; a quintessential example of how us males thought we sounded in the bathroom - but didn't!

Not too far distant Anne Hopper has been treating her Cumbria listeners to most of the score from HIGH SOCIETY - including the Overture, rarely heard on radio - all of which followed on from one of the excellent versions of "Them There Eyes", from a Chesterfield programme, and a few tracks from the Ken Barnes resurrection collection. For those who like the Crosby - Cugat connection, "Hasta Manana" was another rarely heard track that she played, but one of her most interesting broadcasts featured a link up with Spencer Lee who has just written, and had published, a book on song lyrics entitled 'Brother Can You Spare A Rhyme?'. It deals with lyrics from the golden age of music, and before in some instances. Selling at £16.99, it sounds just the sort of tome to include on your Christmas list. To introduce Mr. Lee, Anne played Bing's version of the song whence the book title has been taken.

Like the other lady presenters, Christine Prentice from GMR and Judith Ley of Manx Radio, Anne is a regular source of musical Crosbyana. Miss Ley, particularly, comes up with some unusual material often backed up by anecdotal dialogue and last heard relating how Bing was reluctant to perform Victor Herbert songs, believing them to be out of his register. "Gypsy Love Song" (for Frank Luthwaite) was an example of Jack Kapp's faith in Bing's ability to handle the Herbert melodies, and "Dearly Beloved" also from the Little Bit Of Irish CD were just two of Judith's selections. She still seems convinced that Bing is more popular now than ever before. Not being around in his heyday could be something to do with this misconception. But while she continues with such titles as "I Can Dream Can't I?" and "Last Night On The Back Porch" we are quite content to listen.

Christine tends to play the obvious still, which is what many listeners will want to hear. But she has dipped in to the vast catalogue of wireless broadcasts occasionally to revive such wartime memories as "Bless 'Em All", and has also included the less prevalent "The Kiss In Your Eyes" and "Pennies From Heaven" on her GMR *String Of Pearls* programme in recent times. Having been provided with the CD 'Broadway To Hollywood' by Maggie Ryan, good advantage has been taken of it. Indeed, continuous representations have now ensured that she, too, has a Crosby corner. Not officially designated but it does mean a Bing track in every programme. She is one of several recent conversions to the Crosby cause and is always generous in her words of praise.

Neither Dewi Griffiths, our Welsh connection, nor Graham Danton have been too obvious this time around though Maggie ensured that they were advised of the 14th. October date which they recognised with "The Three Caballeros", from the film of the same name, and "Heartaches By The Number" to mention just a couple. Douglas Nounce, another Devonian, chipped in with "True Love" on his weekday morning programme.

WHERE THERE'S LIFE ....

..... there's Hope. At least for a while longer. This year the master of the quick quip and cinematic persona of the cowardly comic who nearly always gets the girl (except in Road movies!) notched up his 97th. birthday. Chris Robinson noted this event by playing Bing's version of "Thanks For The Memory", which was a track from the album 'Songs I Wish I Had Sung The First Time Around'. Never one to miss the significance of a time or place, Chris tied in several Crosby tracks with current events, and usually in connection with his mystery year quiz. Said conundrum was also an occasion for him to play three Bing tracks for 1947; the two with the Andrews Sisters and Dick Haymes, and "Now Is The Hour". All the presenters were advised of the 23rd anniversary of Bing's demise and Chris duly noted the event with a track or two highlighted by the wireless broadcast parody of "Enjoy Yourself (It's Later Than You Think)" that Bing and Brer Bob performed on a 1950 Chesterfield show. One of the most buoyant numbers from KING OF JAZZ was "Happy Feet", written and composed by Jack Yellen and Milton Ager, and featured by Chris for his trip back to 1930. Coming forward four years he then went on to select "June In January" to stretch the memory of his listeners, and every time I hear this ballad I wonder why Robin and Rainger opted for the word 'feel' instead of the more obvious word: what is wrong with the line 'but I can smell the scent of roses in the air'? Perhaps they thought that any or all of the five senses could detect the aroma of the blossom and that 'feel' would be more poetic, if less logical. Anyway, who am to introduce any kind of criticism into the works of that wonderful songwriting team?!

MALTA MEMORIES

Do we have any reader's who remember the Bing Bar in Straight Street on that island? And how long into the post-war years did it exist? Also known as Cut St. the bar there was a hangout for the boys in blue stationed at

R.A.F. Luka. Wally Oldfield is a regular visitor to that jewel in the Med but I've yet to confer with him. There could well be others who know, apart from the listener to David Lowe's *As Time Goes By* Bristol programme who was keen to reminisce and recapture the scene by the requested playing of "On The Sunny Side Of The Street". David noted with incredulity the passage of time since Bing's passing and played five numbers to commemorate the event - all from what many of us believe to be Bing's best years. "Mr Meadowlark" is one of those uplifting numbers but overall David has given his listeners one of the most interesting and varied selections of Bing I've heard this time around that also included, among many others, "South Sea Island Magic", "Margie", "Red River Valley", "The Singing Hills" and from the wireless "I Don't Know Why But I Do" on which Mr Crosby is accompanied by sultry Bogart babe, Lauren Bacall, inflicting her croaky voice on all within earshot. An appropriate occasion for Bing to have turned her famous line back on herself: 'You do know how to whistle, don't you?'

EAGER BEAVERS

First off it's our old friend Stan White beavering away again on his Crosby crusade - supplying CDs to presenters, making requests and generally keeping the airwaves hosts well informed of everything they wanted to know about Bing but were afraid to ask. On this occasion it was yet another appearance on John Richards' *Magical Memories* programme (BBC Radio Lincolnshire) to promote the Bing Crosby Blitz Hits compact disc. Stan filled in the basic details of this album from the Spectrum series, noting that 20p from the sale of each CD goes to the British Legion Poppy Appeal. He also drew John's attention to the fact that a couple of the tracks were not from the MCA catalogue and that in the case of "I Surrender, Dear" the compiler, Alex Leslie, was unaware and amused when Stan told her that she had 'stolen' the Victor version. John was quite pleased about this as he is a big Gus Arnheim fan so, naturally, the track was played. For those who know Stan, or read this column attentively, it will come as no surprise that the second track played was "There's a Gold Mine In The Sky", for Stan's next great love, after Bing, is organ music on which, for my money, he is the ultimate expert. Thus any track that features both Bing and Eddie Dunstedter, or Helen Crawford and Buddy Cole, will always have an airing if he is on hand to make the selection. Discussion ensued on this early recording of the Hammond organ, and "Miss You", banned by the BBC during the war for being too sentimentally downbeat. John left it to Stan to introduce the final track played: "I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire" from the Universal picture *If I Had My Way*. There's no stopping this man. I can never get him on the 'phone as he is always chatting away to this one and that one about his beloved Bing.!

Then we have the Likely Lads, Arthur Blood and Neil Robinson; and guess what happened to them. Yes, they've been back on Paul Mackenzie's Afternoon Show (he of the ba-ba-boo interjections on Radio Derby) in a gradually improving and more in depth presentation of the life and times of our man. They are certainly enthusiastic about their subject and this came over in their unscripted discussion with their host as they informed him and his listeners of Bing's early career, including a detailed description of that famous thousand mile, Model T trip from Spokane to Los Angeles. Much was made of Bing's drumming during the Dizzy Seven and Musicaladers days, and of brother Everett's very tough negotiations in the run up to his crooning sibling being signed by Bill Paley; and, too, of Bing's prowess as an all-round sportsman. The lads selected three songs from the Crosby catalogue. Perhaps, surprisingly, not illustrating their mainly early days dialogue but all good numbers just the same: the 'Millionaire' track again, followed by "I Have Eyes" and, what was one of my original 78s, "Ridin' Down The Canyon": an appealing cowboy ballad that found great favour with Paul Mackenzie. As the programme closed he was to say 'We have had many, many, many calls this afternoon wanting to know how to get in touch with the International Crosby Circle because we'd like to know more about Bing'. Two more invitations have been extended to our Derbyshire duo: on the 20th October and 20th December. By which time there may well be a much more enlightened audience!

PRESIDENTS ALL

During this period of the build up to the American Presidential election, it's worth printing a story related by Barnsey on his *Gold For Grownups* programme in connection with the recent death at the age of 93 of trombonist Abe Lincoln. This musician lent his talent to many bands from the 'Twenties onwards including being a member of the John Scott Trotter Orchestra and Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band at the time of the recording of the *Bing With A Beat* album. Paul played "Last Night On The Back Porch" and related the anecdote of the night when Abe Lincoln and a fellow musician were stopped by the police for a traffic infringement. They were asked their names, and after Lincoln had complied, the officer said to his companion, with heavy sarcasm, 'And I suppose you're George Washington.' 'As a matter of fact I am.', he responded. They were promptly hauled down the nick where their papers established that they were indeed Abe Lincoln and George Washington! Both being members of the same band at that time. Barnsey made good use of The Diary after playing the KMH version of "One, Two, Button Your Shoe" when he noted that on the 15th October 1936 work commenced on the Crosby building on Sunset Boulevard, the same day as the broadcast. Another track heard from around that time was "Shoe Shine Boy" '.... a track that proves beyond peradventure that Bing had more than his fair share of jazz in his soul.'

Most of the *Gold For Grownups* tracks are jazz orientated so there's plenty of Bing with both the major Louis's; Bushkin and the Dorseys; Connee and the Andrews Sisters, et al. A few ballads crept in, bearing in mind that the calendar numbers are usually featured. Indeed, for October there were both tracks - Bing's first and last recordings. Fluffs and blow-ups are not overlooked either. The notorious "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" ('At one time only available under the counter in a sealed wrapper!') and the hilarious "We're A Couple Of Soldiers, My Baby And Me" which also received an airing. Of the latter song Paul was very dismissive, neither wanting nor bothering to check the composer credits. However, it was none other than Harry Woods, a

composer of many fine songs, who penned that risible roundelay. It has a certain tongue-in-cheek charm and it is, after all, a song of the depression years which lends more meaning to the sugary sentimentality expressed therein. And, I might tell you, the highly colourful sheet music adorns one of the walls in my Bing room. Paul was later to relate a story concerning Harry Woods who, using his wooden leg, set about someone he was in disagreement with. Paul thought this somewhat bizarre aggression hardly befitting the composer of "Try A Little Tenderness"! After the "Ac-cent-chu-ate The Positive" fluff Paul commented that there was a certain reassurance in knowing that nobody's perfect. Of the same song, and with similar sentiments, he stated that the recording date given on the CD was incorrect. So it's equally reassuring that even our very knowledgeable Barnsey also gets it wrong occasionally, as the given date was spot on. In deference to his sensitivity, however, he did don sackcloth and ashes in a subsequent programme!

WHERE THE RIVER SHANNON FLOWS .... AND POINTS BEYOND

..... there is a radio station called Shannonside Northern Sound: and we have a letter from presenter Eddie Murphy (who has now joined the ICC) advising us that as of the beginning of July he has introduced a Crosby Corner on his regular *Sounds Nice* record programme. Eddie informs us of some eight numbers already played, including "Spanish Town", "Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan", "Careless Hands" and a couple of tracks from the new Blitz Hits CD. George O'Reilly has already sent Eddie the *Little Bit Of Irish* album and he must be in line for a few more. Especially as he says the Corner was launched to meet the demand of the number of Crosby requests that were coming in to the studio. As well as featuring the track Eddie says he likes to give a 'little background information'. Cue for a copy of the Diary or, if he is to feature wireless source material, Lionel Pairpoint's amazing new radio directory, '.... And Here's Bing!' But that is too precious to be going for free.

I have recently received a cassette of Eddie's programme, a Bing special, no less, marking the 23rd. anniversary of Bing's demise. In an hour long broadcast Eddie presented a very knowledgeable, potted biography of Bing using a lot of reminiscing dialogue from the Old Groaner himself. The programme's host was helped out with information and material supplied by George Harwood, Jim Reilly, Ernest Sutkowski and Stan White who ensured that the presentation was both factually accurate and musically enhanced. Eddie featured thirteen tracks ranging from Bing's first solo, "Muddy Water" to his last recording "Once In A While", with the Gordon Rose Orchestra. Apart from a comedy number with Judy Garland and Jack Pepper - "Stop Your Gambling" - from 14th March 1951 Chesterfield - all were commercial recordings. During the course of the programme 'phone calls were received and Eddie did his best to accede to listeners Bing requests. He obviously enjoyed presenting this Bing-fest which he closed with a few well chosen notable facts that left his listeners in no doubt that Bing was the best loved and most successful recording artiste of the 20th Century. We welcome Eddie on the Crosby Corner circuit and look forward to a long association with our worldwide Circle of like-minded friends.

JIM HAS FIXED IT

By that I mean that he has contrived to get himself on Angel Community Radio to present no less than four one hour programmes on the master. This is Jim Reilly we're talking about here; a Crosby stalwart whose enthusiasm knows no bounds. Over a four week period he has been given freedom of the air down there on the Hampshire riviera with a remarkable mini-series entitled *Bing - A Profile On The Life & Music Of Bing Crosby*. Angel broadcasts on 87.9 Fm and presents music of the kind that would, broadly, pass muster with all who read this magazine. This series has been a tour de force with an immense scope covering every aspect of Bing's life and can be described only as a labour of love. I'm sure that Jim got as much if not more pleasure out of setting up, compiling and presenting the programmes as any other person. However, listener response has been very good with comments such as 'boost to morale' and 'therapeutic' being typical of 'phone-in comments, all of which must have been very encouraging for our amateur aspirant of the airwaves. Jim read his script, and it was noticeable, but one of the objects of Angel Community Radio is to present and give opportunity to the 'man/woman in the street', so the regular audience are not expecting slick professionalism. Indeed, a segment of all Angel broadcasts includes their very own fluffs and bloopers!

With regard to the actual content there were in excess of sixty tracks featured and covering every source. Inevitably, many were Jim's personal favourites but a creditable attempt was made to departmentalise Bing's career with each programme having its own theme: Where The Blue Of The Night (covering his early life); The Silver Screen; Radio Days, and The Final Chapter. Too many songs to list of course but I'm pleased he included "What Is It?", "Star Dust", "Learn To Croon" and "Empty Saddles". The script was factual, maybe a little clinical but, as one would expect from such a knowledgeable source, wholly accurate; and their can be few listeners who, if they've been paying attention, could not be aware of Bing's impressive achievements as the world's best loved entertainer. Well done Jim for a creditable accomplishment!

Do we have any Scottish members tuning in to Sid Atkinson's programme on Moray Firth Radio? If so they will have heard a couple of tracks from the import album *American Award Winners & Nominees 1934 - 1960*. Sid played the first and last tracks; "Love In Bloom" and "The Second Time Around" noting of the HIGH TIME number that though Bing was getting on a bit his pipes still sounded beautiful.

Meanwhile, out in Bermagui, New South Wales, Australia, Ron Field was showing imaginative opportunism by paying homage to a unique and much loved Lady, our own Queen Mother, whilst at the same time promoting the voice and memory of Bing on Hospital Radio HFM 93.7. In a special 100th Birthday tribute, which went out on Friday 4th August, 11 am to 2.30 p.m., Ron presented yet another 'Mainly Bing'

programme. For the record this one was No. 54 following on from a previous 204 Bing-packed specials that he had broadcast from Wollongong. Ron tells me that he tries not to repeat a song if possible so it can be seen that his listening audience has been treated to just about the entire Crosby catalogue of both commercially recorded and radio/tv material. The thirty-one Bing tracks out of a total fifty-one on the Queen Mum special all had titles or lyrics appropriate to the occasion and Her Majesty. Picking out just a few examples to illustrate Ron's thoughtful compilation there were "Happy Birthday / Auld Lang Syne", "Lovely Lady", "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby", "The Day You Came Along", "Sweet And Lovely", "Anniversary Waltz" and "Young At Heart". The Bing tracks were interspersed with such stirring music as 'Pomp And Circumstance', 'Knightsbridge March' (the In Town Tonight signature tune), 'Rule Britannia', a 'Scottish Dance', "There'll Always Be An England" and, showing that he'd done his homework and knew his subject, "Underneath The Arches" by two of the Queen Mum's favourites from the Crazy Gang, Flanagan & Allen. With Bing's Noel Coward medley from the London Palladium, and a track by the Master himself, it may be seen that the programme had a very British back-up to the Crosby content. But the Antipodean connections weren't overlooked either with "Waltzing Matilda" and "Waiata Poi", both by Peter Dawson, representing music from the southern hemisphere. It must be almost worth while being hospitalised given this kind of programme. Good on yer, mate. It certainly cheered me up!

WELCOME HOME

Back in the fold after a very long absence is Arthur Allen, one of the principal founders of the original Crosby Society in the Spring of 1950. Arthur's return was a direct result of hearing Stan White on Radio Lincolnshire. I'm sure that there will be more about this happy reunion elsewhere in the magazine - but this is an appropriate place to acknowledge the power of 'advertising' on the wireless that brought this all about. It can't be said too often: write in; 'phone in; e-mail - send carrier pigeons - but however you communicate try to play your part in keeping Bing's voice and the ICC on the airwaves. Just let them know we ain't gonna go away!

Bert Bishop

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Well here we are approaching the end of yet another year and I have a lot of CDs to discuss this time around. It is true to say that there is a quite a degree of duplication of titles arising and unfortunately we are not always getting too many titles that are new to compact disc. It is however, still nice to see so many Crosby CDs finding their way into the record shops in the UK, America and Japan. I must apologise for not being able to give you information in all instances on where certain CDs can be purchased or their selling prices. There is still no firm news on the BMG radio material CDs that Ken Barnes put together for them all those light years ago (about 2 and a half years now) except for a whisper that they may come out in the New Year as a box set. We will just have to wait and see what develops. My top three CDs for the year are "Day By Day" Nostalgia Gold Collection, "Academy Award Winners & Nominees 1934-1960" MCA and "Bing Crosby Going Hollywood Vol. Two" Jasmine Records.

A Merry Christmas
With Bing Crosby & The Andrews Sisters — **MCA 088 112 317-2** — **USA**

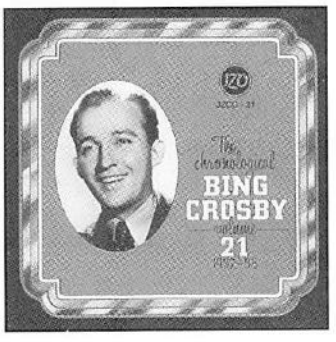
1. Happy Holiday
2. Jing-A-Ling Jing-A-Ling
3. Twelve Days Of Christmas
4. The First Snowfall
5. I'd Like To Hitch A Ride With Santa Claus
6. Poppa Santa Claus
7. You're All I Want For Christmas
8. The Christmas Tree Angel
9. Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town
10. O Fir Tree Dark
11. Christmas Candles
12. Jingle Bells
13. Christmas In Killarney
14. Winter Wonderland
15. Here Comes Santa Claus
16. Looks Like A Cold Cold Winter
17. Merry Christmas Polka
18. Mele Kalikimaka
19. Is Christmas Only A Tree?
20. Christmas Island

This is a fine Christmas compilation by our man in the United States, Wig Wiggins. The quality is very good and it is a jolly pleasant Christmas album that I am sure will get a lot of plays in my house over the festive season. My congratulations go to Wig for another great CD on the MCA label. We all know the six Christmas titles Bing made with the sisters (tracks 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18) and Bing's contributions (tracks 1, 4, 7, 10, 13) but may not be so familiar with the Andrews Sisters own contributions (tracks 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 20). I particularly liked the songs they sing with Guy Lombardo & His Royal Canadians. Running Time: 57.34 Price: $12

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 21 **Jonzo Records JZCD-21** **UK**

1. Dancing Under The Stars
2. Palace In Paradise (-A)
3. Palace In Paradise (-B)
4. When You Dream About Hawaii (-A)
5. When You Dream About Hawaii (-B)
6. Sail Along Silvery Moon
7. Can I Forget You
8. The Folks Who Live On The Hill (-A)
9. The Folks Who Live On The Hill (Brief Rehearsal)
10. The Folks Who Live On The Hill (-B)
11. I Still Love To Kiss You Goodnight
12. Remember Me
13. Basin Street Blues
14. Bob White (Watcha Gonna Swing Tonight)
15. There's A Goldmine In The Sky
16. When The Organ Played 'O Promise Me'
17. Let's Waltz For Old Times' Sake
18. In The Mission By The Sea
19. My Heart Is Taking Lessons
20. This Is My Night To Dream (-A)
21. This Is My Night To Dream (-B)
22. On The Sentimental Side
23. The Moon Of Manakoora (-A)
24. The Moon Of Manakoora (-B)

It is great to see 'In The Mission By The Sea' and 'I Still Love To Kiss You Goodnight' making their debuts to CD. 'Can I Forget You', 'There's A Goldmine In The Sky' and 'Let's Waltz For Old Times' Sake' have only had limited exposure so all in all this makes for a pleasant album. Jonzo were unfortunately unable to get a good copy of the Take-A of 'When You Dream About Hawaii' otherwise the sound quality is very good indeed although for the life of me I don't see the logic of including six seconds of rehearsal (track 9) - I blinked and almost missed it - if you see what I mean. I think that this is a very worthwhile album to add to your collections - it would be worth buying for the two debut songs. This CD is only obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £10.65 including pp. (or two for £21). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).



Bing Crosby Blitz Hits **Spectrum 544 263-2** **UK**

1. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams
2. I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire
3. Meet The Sun Halfway
4. There's A Gold Mine In The Sky
5. A Man And His Dream
6. The Singing Hills
7. Yours Is My Heart Alone
8. Sweet Potato Piper
9. Thine Alone
10. My Melancholy Baby
11. I Surrender Dear
12. Still The Bluebird Sings
13. April Played The Fiddle
14. Alla En El Rancho Grande
15. Sierra Sue
16. Too Romantic
17. Miss You
18. You Are My Sunshine

This is one in a series of albums brought out on the Spectrum label to commemorate the wartime horror of the Blitz and these appeared in the record shops at the end of August. This is a very good compilation of Bing songs although I don't quite see how 'Thine Alone' found its way into the collection. Also it should be noted that the 1931 Gus Arnheim version of 'I Surrender Dear' has been used instead of the 1939 version which makes it a bit early for the period in question. Excuse my quibbling, as this is a very good CD to add to your collections. The following songs have not had too much exposure on CD (tracks 4, 6, 9, 13, 14 and 17). Other CDs released at the same time include those by Anne Shelton, Vera Lynn, Al Bowlly, George Formby and Gracie Fields. Running Time: 51.18 Price: £6.99

Don't Fence Me In (22 Number One Hits) **Pulse PLS CD 381** **UK**

1. Swinging On A Star
2. Pennies From Heaven
3. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
4. Brother Can You Spare A Dime?
5. Just One More Chance
6. I Can't Begin To Tell You
7. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
8. Dinah
9. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me
10. Too Marvellous For Words
11. Out Of Nowhere
12. Sunday Monday Or Always
13. Moonlight Becomes You
14. It's Been A Long Long Time
15. Don't Fence Me In
16. Please
17. It's Easy To Remember
18. Three Little Words
19. I'll Be Seeing You
20. Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin
21. Now Is The Hour
22. White Christmas

It is nice to see this number of Bing's number one hits together on one CD although there is obviously nothing new to CD included. Nevertheless it is a value for money compilation with all the songs making a hit with me. The CD has a distinctive sleeve cover but there are no sleeve notes or much in the way of information but what do you expect for the money? Running Time: 66.01 Price: £3.99

Just For Fun - Take Two **Broadway Intermission BRCD-138** **USA**

1. Theme / Dialogue, 2. I'm Gonna Sit Right And Right Myself A Letter / Wake Up & Live / Three Letters w Jack Benny and Andy Devine, 3. Take My Heart w Jimmy Dorsey, Bobby Van Eps, Elisabeth Allen, Ben Berman and Jack Kapp, 4. Sweet Is The Word For You. 5. Iowa (takes 1, 2 and 3), 6. Iowa (take 4), 7. Seventh Air Force Tribute, 8. Apalachicola FLA w Bob Hope, 9. Too Late Now, 10. Civilisation, 11. Broadcast Dialogue w Claudette Colbert, 12. Philco Commercial w Al Jolson, 13. How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down On The Farm, 14. One More Sunrise (Morgen), 15. Melancholie, 16. Pick Yourself Up (Take 2) / Roxie (Takes 1,2 and 3) w Fred Astaire, 17. That's What Life Is All About

This is the second volume of 'Just For Fun' (I reviewed Volume One in the last issue) and if you like to hear Bing's fluffs then this is for you. I can't get very enthusiastic about this CD as I feel that it is a somewhat of a miss-mash of an album and the quality is to say the least variable. There is of course some rare material included from private recordings but in the main the fluffs are from radio. Running Time: 58.53 *Price: $15.00*

Film Favourites **Pegasus PGNCD820** **EEC**

1. Please
2. Love Is Just Around The Corner
3. Down By The River
4. Pennies From Heaven
5. Sweet Leilani
6. The Moon Got In My Eyes
7. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
8. On The Sentimental Side
9. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams
10. Only Forever
11. Road To Morocco
12. White Christmas
13. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive
14. Going My Way
15. Swinging On A Star
16. The Bells Of St Mary's

There is nothing new to CD on this pleasant enough and reasonably priced album. It is of course a good compilation of Bing's songs from his days on the silver screen. The quality is fine and I am indebted to member Barry Whittingham for making me aware it.
Running Time: 45:56 *Price £3.99*

Ol' Man River BMG BVCJ-37168 **Japan**

1. Muddy Water
2. I'm Coming Virginia
3. Side By Side
4. That's Grandma
5. Mary
6. Ol' Man River
7. Make Believe
8. Lovable
9. I'm Afraid Of You
10. You Took Advantage Of Me
11. It Must Be True
12. Fool Me Some More
13. The Little Things In Life
14. I Surrender Dear
15. Them There Eyes
16. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams
17. Just A Gigolo
18. One More Time
19. Three Little Words
20. Thanks To You
21. I'm Gonna Get You
22. I'm Through With Love
23. Just One More Chance
24. Ho Hum

I wish to thank Japanese member Miho Sasaji for sending this CD to me so that I am able to review it here. All the titles that appear on this album are from the early thirties and have of course appeared on the Jonzo CDs for that period. There are a few clicks included but generally the sound quality is good and for those that like Bing in the early years this is a pleasant CD. I am afraid that I have been unable to obtain a source for this CD in the UK so can't give you any price details.
Running Time: 75:46

The Rhythm Boys (1927 - 1930) **Blue Lantern Electric Records BLCD 103** **USA**

1. Side By Side
2. Magnolia
3. Mississippi Mud / I left My Sugar Standing
4. Sweet L'il - Ain't She Sweet (In The Rain
5. The Five Step
6. It Won't Be Long Now
7. That's Grandma (1927)
8. Miss Annabelle Lee
9. From Monday On
10. What Price Lyrics
11. That's My Weakness Now
12. Wa-Da-Da
13. That's Grandma (1928)
14. My Suppressed Desire
15. Rhythm King
16. So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together
17. Louise
18. Happy Feet
19. A Bench In The Park
20. I Like To Do Things For You
21. A Bench In The Park
22. Three Little Words
23. Them There Eyes

This is a nice tribute album to the Rhythm Boys that captures their unique style of singing in those far off days. There is of course nothing new to CD on the album but the quality is good and I am pleased to add it to my collection with many thanks to Wig Wiggins who kindly sent it to me. The sleeve notes give all the recording dates and take references.
Running Time: 73.11. *Price $13*

Harry Lillis - Just What I Wanted **Limited Edition HLYCD 005**

1. C'est Si Bon (1960)
2. Forever And Ever
3. Don't Be A Do-Badder
4. Let's Not Be Sensible
5. Say One For Me
6. Me And My Shadow
7. Team Work w Bob Hope
8. Melancholie (1960)
9. I Couldn't Care Less
10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore
11. The Man On The Flying Trapeze
12. Straight Down The Middle
13. Mr Booze
14. Just What I Wanted For Christmas
15. Under Paris Skies (1960)
16. The Loveliest Night Of The Year
17. Style w Frank Sinatra & Dean Martin
18. Now You Has Jazz (1977)
19. Let Us Break Bread Together w Frank Sinatra
20. The Road To Hong Kong w Bob Hope
21. Sail Away From Norway
22. Tomorrow Is My Lucky Day
23. Cecilia
24. Morgen (1960)
25. Say One For Me w Debbie Reynolds
26. Don't Be A Do-Badder (Reprise)
27. Peace On Earth / Little Drummer Boy w David Bowie

This is the latest and I believe the last of these very limited edition CDs from our old friend Harry Lillis. As you can see this has some rarities included. The "Holiday In Europe" tracks are from the rehearsals for the album that took place in 1960. Virtually all the tracks are new to CD so I am sure that this will be a very popular with members. Anyone wanting copies of this CD can write to me to obtain this non-profit making album. At the time of going to press I had not got a copy of this CD, so unfortunately I will have to review it in the next issue of BING. I am told that not too many copies are available so orders will be dealt with strictly on a first come first served basis. Cheques are to be made payable to me. Price UK Mainland £12.00 (including Packing and Postage), Rest of Europe £13.50. USA Members can write to Wig Wiggins for more information.

Bing Crosby And Friends **Golden Options GO 3808** **EEC**

1. Gone Fishin' w Louis Armstrong, 2. A Couple Of Song & Dance Men w Fred Astaire, 3. Zing A Little Zong w Jane Wyman, 4. The Spaniard Who Blighted My Life w Al Jolson, 5. The Moon Came Up With A Great Idea Last Night w Peggy Lee, 6. Mr Gallagher & Mr Shean w Johnny Mercer, 7. Connecticut w Judy Garland, 8. Put It There Pal (-A) w Bob Hope, 9. Pennies From Heaven w Frances Langford & Louis Armstrong, 10. Shine w The Mills Bros., 11. A Fine Romance w Dixie Lee Crosby, 12. Alexander's Ragtime Band w Eddie Cantor & Connie Boswell, 13. Small Fry w Johnny Mercer, 14. Pistol Packin' Mama w The Andrews Sisters, 15. Road To Morocco (-T) w Bob Hope, 16. Dinah (-A) w The Mills Bros., 17. The Three Caballeros w The Andrews Sisters, 18. Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries w The Mills Bros. and The Boswell Sisters, 19. The Waiter & The Porter & The Upstairs Maid w Mary Martin & Jack Teagarden, 20. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive (-A) w The Andrews Sisters

I think that I am right in saying that this is fourth CD release with the title 'Bing Crosby & Friends' and there is a fair amount of duplication of song titles with at least eight tracks appearing on each of the other CDs. The overall quality is quite good although there is the odd click here and there. All the titles have appeared on CD quite often with the exception of tracks (3) and (5) so there is nothing new to CD here. I'd like to thank my friend and fellow member Phil Clarke for loaning me this CD to enable me to review it but again unfortunately I can't say how much it costs, as I have been unable to locate it in any of my normal sources. Running Time: 60:18

Bing Crosby "Universal Legends" **Universal MVCE 24086** **Japan**

1. Please
2. Learn To Croon
3. Love In Bloom
4. It's Easy To Remember
5. Pennies From Heaven
6. Sweet Leilani
7. The Moon Got In My Eyes
8. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams
9. If I Had My Way
10. Only Forever
11. Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie
12. White Christmas
13. Moonlight Becomes You
14. Sunday Monday Or Always
15. Swinging On A Star
16. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
17. The Bells Of St Mary's
18. Blue Skies
19. A Couple Of Song & Dance Men
20. But Beautiful
21. In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening
22. Count Your Blessings

I was pleased to see this CD released at long last as I had almost given up ever seeing it coming to fruition. I compiled the list of titles (actually I was asked at the time for film songs) and this running order for Universal back in October 1997. I have tried to obtain a copy but it failed to arrive in time for me to review it this time around. I am also given to understand that the mail order company Magpie have listed this album in their latest catalogue and that it can also be obtained through other outlets with the price ranging from £9.99 - £10.99 in UK and $16.95 in USA

Bing Crosby & Friends - Tribute To Irving Berlin **Allegro GRCD 180002** **USA**

1. Everybody Step, 2. A Couple Of Song And Dance Men w Fred Astaire, 3. I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now w Billy De Wolfe, 4. Getting Nowhere, 5. Say It Isn't So, 6. I'll See You In C-u-b-a w Olga San Juan, 7. You'd Be Surprised - Olga San Juan, 8. Puttin' On The Ritz - Fred Astaire, 9. Heat Wave - Olga San Juan, 10. Blue Skies, 11. You Keep Coming Back Like A Song/ What'll I Do? / All Alone /Remember, 12. I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket / Cheek To Cheek / All By Myself, 13. Any Bonds Today / This Is The Army Mr Jones / White Christmas / God Bless America, 14. A Serenade To An Old Fashioned Girl, 15. The Little Things In Life / Not For All The Rice In China / Russian Lullaby, 16. You Keep Coming Back Like A Song

This is the same as 'Blue Skies Soundtrack' Sandy Hook SH 2095 but if you missed this earlier album then this may well be of interest for it also includes all the actual soundtrack recordings together with material that was cut from the film. The extra sound track recordings you get are 'Say It Isn't So', 'What'll I Do' / 'All Alone' / 'Remember', 'I'm Putting All My Eggs

In One Basket' / 'Cheek To Cheek' and 'God Bless America'. I am sorry to report that I am also unable to let you know where to obtain the CD or advise on its cost.

The Legendary Bing Crosby **Dressed To Kill METRO253**
1. Lady Of Spain, 2. The Very Thought Of You, 3. June In January, 4. Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah, 5. PS I Love You, 6. If This Isn't Love, 7. Ol' Buttermilk Sky, 8. Great Day, 9. I Got The Sun In The Morning, 10. May I, 11. It's A Good Day, 12. You Go To My Head, 13. The Old Lamplighter, 14. With Every Breath I Take, 15. Temptation, 16. You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me, 17. Someday Sweetheart.
Once again I am indebted to a member for sending me photocopies of the sleeves for this CD but unfortunately I can't for the life of me remember who sent me them - my apologies. A glance at the contents will tell you that this is a mixture of radio and commercial material. I am sorry that I am once again unable to give you the price or tell you where it can be purchased

Bing Crosby's Christmas **ABM MCD1152** **UK**
1. Twelve Days Of Christmas, 2. White Christmas, 3. Christmas Carols 1, 4. Sleigh Ride, 5. Jingle Bells, 6. Little Jack Frost Get Lost, 7. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, 8. The First Noel, 9. Here Comes Santa Claus, 10. You're All I Want For Christmas, 11. Christmas Carols 2, 12. Santa Claus Is Coming To Town, 13. Sleigh Bell Serenade, 14. The Christmas Song, 15. O Fir Tree Dark, 16. Adeste Fideles, 17. Silent Night, 18. Let's Start The New Year Right
A circular arrived from ABM on my doormat advising me of this CD and am told that it would most probably be released in November and that it should be on sale in most record shops. I am unable to review it here. Price £5.99

New Album Scheduled for Release October / November Time

Classic Crosby 1926 -1934 **NAXOS 8120507** **Germany**
I was given to understand that this CD was originally scheduled for release at the beginning of October but it had not materialised at the time of going to press. Naxos is renowned for producing excellent cheap classical records and this is somewhat of a departure for them. I think they have already released a Paul Whiteman CD but I am not sure if any Bing titles are included. The Bing CD title listed in Naxos handouts is shown as Classic Crosby 1920 - 1934 which would be quite clever if it was correct - unless Bing started his career a little earlier than we all think? Price: £4.99

GUEST APPEARANCES

Hits Of The Blitz **Spectrum 554 427-2** **UK**
18 Tracks (2 Bing) 'A Man And His Dream' and 'If I Had My Way'. *The other artists on the album are Ambrose & his Orchestra with Jack Cooper, Connee Boswell, The Ink Spots, The Andrews Sisters, Vera Lynn, Flanagan And Allen, Carmen Miranda, Deanna Durbin and Frances Day. Price: £6.99*

Bob Hope -Universal Legends **Universal 112 253-2 LC 01056 UN899**
12 Tracks (6 Bing) 1. The Lady's In Love With You, 2. Road To Moscow w Bing (I assume this to be Morocco), 3. Put It There Pal w Bing, 4. Two Sleepy People w Shirley Ross, 5. Thanks For The Memory w Shirley Ross, 6. When We're Alone w Shirley Ross, 7. The Boys With Proboscis, 8. Chicago Style w Bing, 9. Road To Bali w Bing, 10. Hoot Mon w Bing, 11. The Merry-Go-Run-Around w Bing, 12. Hope In Russia - excerpts from 'Live At The Moscow Embassy Show'
I am indebted to my friend and fellow member Ernest Sutkowski who was kind enough to send me details of this CD which was originally issued in November, 1998. It is of course very similar to previous Bob Hope CDs. Amazon are quoting a price of $13.49.

Reprise Musical Repertory Theatre (4CD Set) **Reprise Records 2-447775** **USA**
58 Tracks (4 Bing) 'Something Sort Of Grandish' w Debbie Reynolds, 'Younger Than Springtime', 'Fugue For Tinhorns' w Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, 'The Oldest Established (Permanent Floating Crap Game In New York)' w Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin.
These, as I expect many of you will remember, were first released on LP in the early sixties with the same four album titles - 1. Finian's Rainbow, 2. Kiss Me Kate, 3. South Pacific and 4. Guys And Dolls. Again I have not obtained these CDs but am informed by Ernest Sutkowski that the re-mastering has created the finest sound reproduction he has yet heard. So I guess they must be good. I did have the original LPs and found them to be very enjoyable listening and I will be pleased to add the CDs to my collection. Price: $44.95 plus tax.

Robin and the 7 Hoods **Artanis ARZ-104-2** **USA**
16 tracks (4 Bing). 'Don't Be a Do-Badder', 'Style' with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, 'Mister Booze' with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr., 'Don't Be a Do-Badder' (finale) with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr.
I am grateful to Greg Van Beek for details of this CD which has been re-mastered from the original 3-track master tape and put on a special 24 Karat CD. Greg commented on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board as follows:
"I just received my copy of this CD from Collectors' Choice today. There is an alternate take of "My Kind of Town" (along with the familiar version), and some session chatter (most with Dean & Frank, but Bing is heard briefly making some comments prior to recording "Style"). Outside of these brief comments from Bing, there are really no other Crosby rarities or surprises to report. The sound quality is excellent, much better than the stereo LP in that the voices are heard more "up front". This is on the "Artanis" (Sinatra spelled backwards) label, made with the Sinatra family's blessing. Sinatra owned his Reprise master tapes, which made the discovery of the studio chatter between takes possible. Personally, I could've done without the 24kt gold CD, in exchange for just a regular CD and a cheaper price! But, if you're a fan of 'Robin & the 7 Hoods', I guess this is a must have." Price $31.95

NOTE: It has been brought to my attention by Bill Piccone of Philadelphia that Pavilion Records have experienced some problems with CDs manufactured in the period 1989-93 and that a number of CDs may be affected by "bronzing". This in time causes the disc to cease playing/tracking. I mention this, as there were Crosby discs released during that time period by Pavilion. According to the magazine 'The Record Collector' the CDs in question were manufactured by Philips Dupont (PDO) and these can be identified by the letters "PDO" or "Made In England" or "Made in UK" around the centre hole of the disc. Any affected discs should be sent (without jewel case or booklet) to PDO Discs Ltd., Helpline, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 5BR, England. Telephone: (0)1254 505300. All bronzed discs will be replaced free of charge by PDO. The Bing discs that could be affected are those purchased between 1989 and 1993 and I am fairly sure that this could only apply to 'That's Jazz' PASTCD9739 ("Bing Crosby Sings Jazz" on the spine). It may be appropriate to check other CDs purchased during the same period. This does not apply to subsequent pressings of the disc.

As always I wish to thank all those people who advised me of new issues of CDs during the course of the year as without this help my columns would be somewhat slimmer. May I remind you that this is the time when the record companies re-issue many of the Bing albums I have reviewed in the past containing seasonal material, so look out for them in the shops. Finally, I want to take this opportunity in wishing all our members a happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. Until next year, best wishes,

Jim Reilly

THE BING CROSBY COLLECTABLES 2001 CALENDAR

The Calendar went on sale at the AGM at Leeds in October and the response to it was excellent. It is probably one of the most colourful calendars you will ever come across and it is crammed full of pictures of Crosby Collectables that will brighten up your year. If you haven't already ordered your copies, order today to avoid disappointment.

DON'T MISS OUT BY ORDERING TOO LATE

THE WALTZ OF MEMORY

Clive Menadue strikes a familiar chord as he discusses the effects of age and then goes on to pose a serious question about Jack Kapp's ability

Let me begin by admitting that about a week ago I experienced what I'm told the Americans refer to as, "A Senior Moment". Those of you who are not only pushing late middle age, but are in fact hammering the bejabbers out of it, will instantly recognise the phenomenon. What actually happened was that I found myself halfway up the stairs with a flower pot in one hand and a guide to the London Underground system in the other!

Hurriedly descending the stairs I replaced the objects as quickly as I could before lying down on a nearby sofa and perusing the latest edition of BING. Some time later my wife entered the room carrying the pot of now rather bedraggled looking flowers. She displayed the rather puzzled expression she usually wore when speaking to me. She brandished the pot.

"Did you put this in the writing desk drawer?" She asked patiently.

"Now why would I do a thing like that?" I replied casually as I continued to read the magazine.

"Well, you probably did it for the same reason that caused you to leave your London railway guide in the umbrella stand!"

With this parting shot she left the room. A few minutes later I managed to ease myself off the sofa without spraining anything essential before placing my copy of BING in a spot where it wouldn't take the combined efforts of Sherlock Holmes and a dozen bloodhounds to find it. I then walked to the window and looked out at the rain while musing on Bing - his life - his career, and some of those who helped to shape it.

RADIO MOMENTS

Those of us who were born in the late twenties and early thirties grew up to spend many an evening in the green or red glow from the radio set in the corner. In those far off days, families often listened in groups to such things as MONDAY NIGHT AT SEVEN, or to Jack Payne and his band, "Saying it With Music". Later, during the war, we all visited THE OLD TOWN HALL with Clay Keyes, or listened with fascinated dread to AN APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR introduced in chilling tones

by Valentine Dyall (The Man In Black).

As far as Bing is concerned though, I believe I first fell under his spell when Christopher Stone, the very first disc jockey, played Bing's version of THANKS, whilst describing the scene in the film which featured the song. Stone played all kinds of music from the classics to the latest in popular music with no hint of bias and he became so prominent in his field that he was invited to top the bill at the London Palladium just playing records on stage! He was also given a three hour spot on radio during Christmas day to play his own choice of recordings and Bing inevitably featured in them. Indeed, it was almost impossible to produce a programme based on gramophone records in the thirties and forties without including at least one Crosby recording.

HOUSEWIVES' CHOICE which was broadcast quite early in the morning began its run in 1946 and for many years it almost always included TWO songs by Bing which hardly represented the flood of requests for his records received by the BBC.

Something else that I remember from my radio days illustrates the way in which Bing's great talent shone a bright light into the dark and musty corners where musical snobbery breeds. I was listening to a panel of 'Experts' discussing recently released classical records when the chairman, the actor John Clements, made a sneering remark about crooners. At first there were quiet murmurs of assent, and then Anona Wynne intervened with, "Oh, but not Bing Crosby, I think he's wonderful!" There followed much clearing of throats and mumbled agreement much to Clements' chagrin. What other popular singer of the twentieth century could find general approval within such a critical and unlikely group.

FILM MOMENTS

Some of you will have been familiar with the films that the Tacoma kid made in the thirties for some time and some of you like me, will have only seen most of them fairly recently. Of course Bing's voice is in great form and there is much of interest to be seen but I wonder if you, like me, have been irritated by some quite unexpected ingredients in these old dishes. Some things about them really puzzle and annoy me. It seems to me at least that some of the people who had the groaner's career in their hands in the thirties were slow to realise that the crowds who came to see his films were really there primarily to hear him sing. Ignoring that rather obvious and clear conclusion, the film makers sometimes appeared to deliberately suggest that his vocals were trivial and unimportant things. I should imagine that this intensely irritated his fans who probably made up the bulk of the audience.

"For instance?" I hear you say. Well, for instance, brief bursts of DINAH and PLEASE are all we are allowed in 'THE BIG BROADCAST'. In the later film 'TOO MUCH HARMONY', Judith Allen is allowed to bawl tunelessly across Bing's version of THANKS, and in 'SHE LOVES ME NOT' Kitty Carlisle using the kind of voice that used to drive vicars from the drawing room during those Victorian musical evenings warbles icily through 'LOVE IN BLOOM' at a time when we all (apart from Miss Carlisle's family) wanted Bing to reprise the song. Did no one realise that her style of singing was of exactly the kind that Bing's new vocal broom had swept away back into the musty corners of the past?

One of the very worst instances of this apparent desire to deprive the cinema audiences of the time of a pleasurable evening listening to Harry Lillis singing songs as only he could is the absolutely idiotic sequence when Bing attempts to sing one of his best upbeat songs in the film 'DOUBLE OR NOTHING'. One quick exhilarating chorus of SMARTY from Bing and then we get some overweight buffoon roaring and yelling in a mock operatic voice right across Bing's efforts! To a lesser extent I could have done with a better produced version of SWEET LEILANI in WAIKIKI WEDDING which I felt was thrown carelessly away and, although Shirley Ross had a pleasant (if rather staid) voice, I would have preferred it if she'd allowed Bing to have 'BLUE HAWAII' to himself.

Bing and Shirley Ross sing about 'Blue Hawaii'

Let's face it, all most of these films had going for them was Bing's charming character and his matchless voice. I just fail to understand why the most important moments in the films I've named should have been marred in that way by professional people who really should have known better.

JACK KAPP - OVER RATED?

It has been very sensibly said by many people that if we all liked the same things it would be a very dull world. As for me - well I revel in the variance of taste and opinion and I have always been fascinated by the evident fact that we just don't hear the same things try as we might. It has been said by Bing, and repeated by other people writing of his life, that Jack Kapp's choice of material for Bing to sing after August 1934 was a major factor in the crooner's growing popularity. Now statements like this are often repeated in book and papers over the years without anyone ever questioning the validity of these claims. At the outset I had better state that by 1934 Bing could have had his songs chosen for him by a partly deaf Eskimo without seriously damaging his career. I don't think Bing ever publicly and openly criticised anyone with whom he was associated over the years, so I won't lend too much weight to his endorsement of Mr. Kapp's much praised abilities. The only criticism of Kapp and his choice of songs of which I'm aware is the odd unfavourable mention by Fred Reynolds when commenting on individual songs in his books.

Of course Bing was obliged to sing the songs he'd featured in his films anyway so we can ignore them in assessing the quality or otherwise of Kapp's choices. The selection of JUST A WEARYIN' FOR YOU and I LOVE YOU TRULY seems a little strange to open with at the start of the partnership. Both were well loved songs in their time but neither of them appeared to suit Bing's delivery with which he was experimenting at the time. Remember, we are speaking of a period when the truly great song writers were at work producing wonderfully melodic shows and individual songs. Mister Crosby was already enormously popular by then and hardly needed to reach back to this kind of material as the elderly loved him anyway.

Now there's no denying that Kapp selected many fine songs for the Spokane sensation to sing but I find some of his preferences to be inexplicable. Just to illustrate my point; in the thirties Bing recorded ROBINS AND ROSES / I GOT PLENTY O' NUTTIN/ SHOESHINE BOY / BEYOND COMPARE / DEAR OLD GIRL / PECKIN' and WHAT IS LOVE? I could go on, and so I suspect could you. Some of these are pleasant enough songs but the acid test comes when you list the numbers that Kapp apparently rejected. They include some of the loveliest popular songs ever written and you surely needed lead in your ears to miss them! They include, ISN'T IT ROMANTIC? / CHEEK TO CHEEK / SMOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES / LET'S FACE THE MUSIC / ISN'T THIS A LOVELY DAY? / CHANGE PARTNERS / MY HEART STOOD STILL / WHERE OR WHEN / IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT. I could add NIGHT AND DAY and BEGIN THE BEGUINE, both recorded by Bing when his higher notes were in sad decline. There are so many more but it would be pointless to continue. Bing sang some of these songs on his radio show in the thirties but he failed to record them while he was at his vocal peak. Perhaps I'm blaming Jack Kapp unjustly. Bing was noted for being stubborn when he didn't want to do something; but Mr. Kapp has so far been given the credit for being a genius at selecting Bing's material and so the brickbats must be aimed in his direction unless some BING reader can shed some light on the reasons for these extraordinary omissions from Bing's recording schedule in the thirties.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Before I go here's a brief review of what was then the latest Crosby film and it follows on nicely from Keith Parkinson's piece. It's from F. Maurice Speed's FILM REVIEW 1948:-

THE EMPEROR WALTZ. "Quite outstanding technicoloured musical; lavish, spectacular and melodious (thanks to some lifting Strauss waltzes) and generally amusing."

Critics rarely see it that way now do they? In this instance it seems that time alters our perceptions of what we see and hear - or so it seems to me.

Just one final piece of information. I have felt lately that I am becoming one with the infinite. Rumour has it that the infinite is really upset about it!

CLIVE MENADUE

(Editor: I can't help but have some sympathy with Clive's views. There were so many great standards in the thirties which seemed to bypass Bing at the time and Jack Kapp must bear the blame for this. Mind you, it's great to have the benefit of hindsight isn't it?)

Bing Crosby Remembered

Steven Lewis picked up the following article for his Bing Crosby Bulletin Board at the end of October. It was written for a Themestream newsletter (www.themestream.com) by Crosby fan Jane Fitzgerald who has given us permission to reproduce it here.

Here we are, almost at the end of the year 2000, arguably the first year of the new millennium, and people are still trying to rate the favorite personalities of the late, great 20th century. Just a couple of weeks ago a disk jockey who hosts a weekly "Sunday Evening Standards" program in Cincinnati was still trying to compare the talents of Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. This misguided DJ compared recordings of the same song made at different periods of each singer's heyday, proving only that each man recorded the song. The question that remains isn't who was greater, but why is someone still trying to compare two crooners who are each incomparable?

Bing Crosby undoubtedly changed the way America (and subsequently the world) delivered a popular song, crooning directly into a microphone. His first recording was in 1926 and he recorded yearly in a career that spanned 51 years and approximately 2000 titles. He is widely recognized as the most successful recording artist

of the 20th century, with over 300 hits and 22 official gold records. He influenced every popular singer who followed, including Perry Como, Dean Martin, Mel Torme, and Frank Sinatra who took a date to listen to Bing and decided he wanted to sing too. To Sinatra's credit, he developed his own style and readily admitted that "we put Bing on a pedestal and the rest of us compete to see who's second." Even Paul McCartney admitted in a televised interview that Bing's 1932 recording of Please was the inspiration for the Beatles' big hit, 'Please, Please Me'.

How can it be, then, that we have seemingly forgotten his contributions to popular music? None of the year-end ballots of 1999 included him. Sinatra was dubbed the voice of the century. The American Film Institute didn't include him in their list of the most popular, although Crosby, in fact, was a number one box office draw between 1944 and 1948, a feat unmatched by any other film personality ever. The May 1999 issue of American Heritage Magazine points to Crosby as most underrated singer of the century and questions, too, how we could brush away his contributions so easily. As Sinatra's character sang to Crosby's in *High Society*, "...you are called the forgotten man."

Time moves along and with it the people who remembered Crosby during the 30's and 40's and even 50's and 60's. It has been nearly a quarter of a century since Bing Crosby passed away on a golf course in Spain, and yet every Christmas season we remember him in seasonal songs and movies, and miss his family's annual television special. Each year during the holidays young people who may never have heard of Bing Crosby discover him. They hear him singing the song that was for so long the largest selling single recording ever, 'White Christmas', they hear the now classic duet, 'Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth', with Bing and David Bowie from Bing's last ever TV Christmas special. They watch the movie *White Christmas* with their families. And they discover anew a man who sang and acted as if everything were so easy. Maybe that's one reason we tend to forget what a huge talent he was. His legacy does live on, however, in 250 compact discs with more being released all over the world on a regular basis.

Who's better or best? Who cares? It's more important that we remember.

Jane Fitzgerald

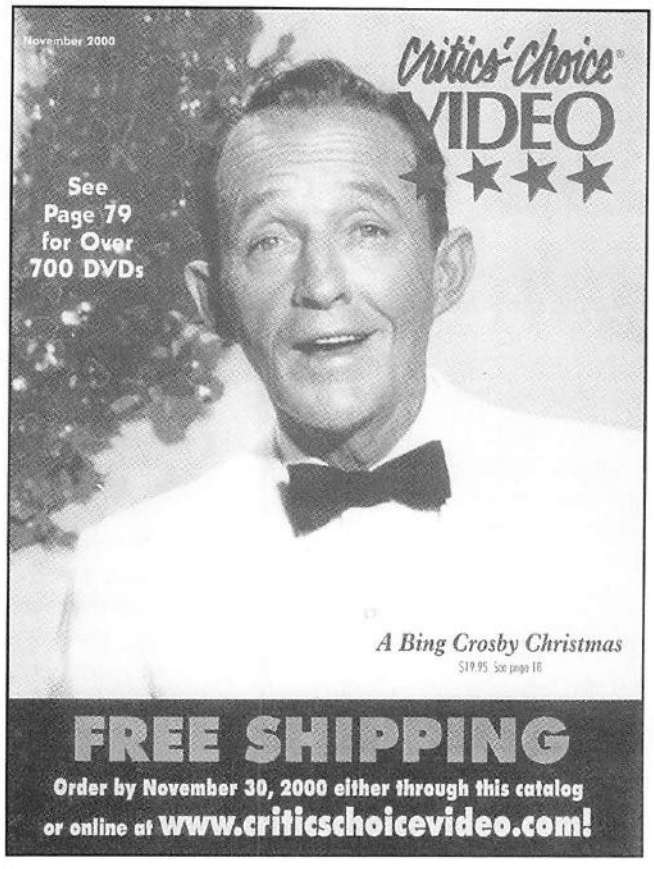
Reel to Reel opportunity

Kathleen Finn, the widow of our late member Ernie Finn, has four large boxes containing reel to reel tapes of mainly Bing material which she would like to dispose of. There are also 40 video tapes (PAL format) containing Bing items plus three books 'The Crosby Years' by Ken Barnes, 'The One and Only Bing' by Bob Thomas and 'Road to Hollywood' by Fred Reynolds. Contact Kath at 14 Redbarn Close, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 1SG (tel: 0161-430-7001) if you are interested in obtaining any of these items.

A Bing Crosby Christmas

Wig mentioned that this 1979 show was now being issued on DVD and he has now forwarded a copy of the front cover of the Critics' Choice Video magazine which has our man prominently displayed and which we reproduce below.

Critics' Choice can be found at www.criticschoicevideo.com.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Bing Crosby

Bing
Hollywood

December 12, 1962

Dear Gord:

Thank you very much for your letter of December 7th. Glad to hear that you find an opportunity to use some of my discs now and then on your radio show.

The new Christmas album which you mentioned in your letter, happily is meeting with very favorable reaction all over the country, and it looks like it's going to be up there on the charts.

"Holiday in Europe" is also doing quite well. The success that these two albums have met with has been very encouraging to me. It's been a long time since I've had anything that has done as well.

We're rehearsing the Christmas TV show now with Mary Martin and Andre Previn. We also have the United Nations Childrens Choir of 60 some voices. Hope you like the show. It's just going to be solid music, I guess.

Christmastime at your house should be very merry, with all those little children - merry and a little mad, too, as you indicate. Hope that you all have a wonderful time -

Always yours,

Bing

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

P.S. Thanks for the beautiful calendar.

Mr. Gordon Atkinson
1159 Adirondack Drive
Ottawa 5, Ontario, Canada

May your days be merry and bright
and may all your Christmases be [illegible]

BING AND KATHRYN

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